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**Primary School Teachers' Encounters with Cases of  
Suspected or Disclosed Child Sexual Abuse**

**RACHEL GRAHAM BA Hons**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTORATE OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY  
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Signed Rachel Sah (candidate)

Date 2.8.96

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This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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*For P.*

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored 45 primary school teachers' encounters with cases of suspected or disclosed child sexual abuse. Stage I involved a cross-sectional survey which investigated the training experiences and support opportunities for teachers in relation to child abuse. The Maslach Burn-out Inventory assessed levels of occupational stress.

Teacher's identification of abuse and their perceived ability to cope with such cases were hypothesised as associated with the perceived adequacy of training and support, and with teacher's reported levels of occupational stress.

Stage II involved interviewing seven teachers to explore the emotional impact of working with cases of suspected or disclosed abuse.

The entire sample felt that initial teacher training had not adequately prepared them to deal with abused children; over 95 per cent said they would welcome more training. Formal support for teachers was limited and, largely, considered inadequate. Nevertheless, the majority felt they would cope 'well' with cases of abuse.

Analysis of results revealed that teachers who had not received disclosures were more likely to rate support as adequate; teachers who had harboured suspicions and teachers who had received disclosures, reported higher levels of burn-out.

Qualitative material revealed factors that affected the ability to cope with cases of abuse, and factors that influenced the emotional impact of such work.

Aspects of primary school teachers' unique position appear to make encounters with abused children particularly disturbing. It is suggested that the emotional impact of such work could be mediated by resources such as training and support. The implications of insufficient resources extend beyond the psychological well being of the teacher to the effective protection of the child. The implications for clinical psychology are discussed.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Overview

Professionals in the mental health field recognise that two of the most influential systems in a child's development are the family and the school (Dowling & Osborne, 1994). For some victims of child sexual abuse, the school may represent an important safe place where teachers are their only figures of authority, continuity, safety and trust. This is supported by limited evidence that teachers are among the adults to whom children most frequently disclose sexual abuse (Houlihan, 1990). Ideally, early detection of abuse followed by a speedy response by a professional who is sensitive to the child's needs, will lead to protection and therapeutic intervention which combine to offer the best hope for a positive long-term outcome for the child and family.

In reality, detecting and managing child sexual abuse are processes prone to complexity and confusion (Furniss, 1991). The reactions to child sexual abuse and the dynamics that professionals can get drawn into are trying and easily misunderstood (Glaser & Frosh, 1993). The potential for professional over or under-reaction has enormous implications not only for the child's protection but also for the well-being of the professional. The emotional impact of working in close contact with abused children is well documented (Richardson & Bacon, 1991), and one potential consequence is the progression towards 'burn-out' (Furniss, 1991).

Burn-out has been defined as:

*A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind (Maslach & Jackson, 1993).*

The literature on child sexual abuse attests to the importance of training and support in order to prevent professional burn-out (Dale, Davies, Morrison & Waters, 1986), yet it appears that during teachers' initial training child sexual abuse is a topic that is rarely addressed. This is supported by the limited research findings to date (Webster, 1991). For a teacher confronted with suspicions of abuse or for a teacher who has received a disclosure from a child, formal channels of support and advice within the educational system appear to be scarce.

The assumption that teachers need/want advice and support is backed up by results such as those published by one local authority service that provided consultations to any professional concerned about child sexual abuse. They found that of the 14 different professional groups who used the service, teachers were the second most frequent users, accounting for one third of all consultations. Social workers were the most regular users which was perhaps not surprising given that it was a social services funded initiative (Peake, 1992).

A teacher's ability to cope with occasional occupational stressors, such as managing an abused child, is likely to depend on the general level of occupational stress experienced. The large body of literature reporting high levels of general stress in teachers (Pithers & Fogarty, 1995) has led some researchers to conclude that it is a career which carries psychological risks (Quick, Murphy & Hurrell, 1992).

## ***1.2. The Extent of Child Sexual Abuse***

In the US there was a 322% national increase in the number of cases of child sexual abuse reported to authorities in the years between 1980 and 1988 (NCCAN,1988). Similar trends are reported by British agencies (NSPCC,1989). Of course, such information cannot tell us whether the figures reflect an actual increase in abuse. It may be that, due to heightened public and professional awareness, abused people are speaking out and professionals are recognising and reporting more than before.

Achieving accurate statistics regarding the scope of the problem is notoriously difficult. Commonly, two methods have been employed: incidence studies that count the number of new cases officially reported to child protection agencies within a given time period, and prevalence studies that survey adult populations to determine what proportion report having been sexually victimised in childhood.

In one UK incidence study, Mrazek, Lynch & Bentovim (1981) investigated the number of cases uncovered by a sample of 1599 professionals (GPs, police surgeons, paediatricians and child psychiatrists) in the course of one year. They estimated that a minimum of three children (up to the age of 15 years) per 1000 (0.3%) could be *recognised* by a professional as having been sexually abused each year. This seems to be a low number considering that some professionals in the study above represent secondary referral services where ratios of child sexual abuse will be higher (Cahill, Llewelyn & Pearson,1991). However, those cases that have been formally identified and reported to child protection agencies are generally accepted to underestimate the true occurrence of child sexual abuse in the general population (Glaser & Frosh,1993).



For every case of child sexual abuse which has been officially reported there are likely to be many more cases that remain either unrecognised or unreported by professionals. Russell (1983) reports that from a random sample of 980 women in San Francisco, only two per cent of all intrafamilial sexual abuse cases and six per cent of all extrafamilial cases, had been brought to the attention of child protection agencies. Similar results were published by Kelly, Regan & Burton (1991) from a sample of British students who revealed that up to 95 per cent of disclosures in a sample of 1244 young people had gone unreported. A handful of studies have investigated teachers' reporting behaviour. For example, Baxter & Beer (1990) reported that only 14 per cent of their sample of American school personnel (sample size=42) indicated that they had reported a case of child abuse during their teaching career. The barriers to disclosing abuse that children and professionals face will be discussed later, but the fact that inhibitions and obstructions exist is supported by findings from retrospective prevalence studies which reveal strikingly higher rates of child sexual abuse.

From a recent review of 24 international prevalence studies across industrialised countries, Finkelhor (1994) concludes that non-clinical prevalence rates range from seven to 36 per cent for women and three to 29 per cent for men. However, several factors threaten the reliability of such results. Firstly, the large variance in proportions of sexual abuse reported by the different studies stems, in part, from the different definitions of sexual abuse employed. Although most definitions share the notion of the exploitation of adult authority and power for the sexual gratification of the adult, a consensus regarding exact operational definitions has yet to be reached. This results in a situation where conservative definitions (restricted to physical genital contact only),

generate much lower rates than broader definitions that include any unwanted sexual advance whether or not contact was made. Secondly, different methods of data collection (face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews or anonymous questionnaires) will also influence whether or not adults will feel able to share their experiences with a researcher (Renvoize, 1993). A further problem of adult retrospective methods is that the recall of childhood memories is subject to some inaccuracies which there are rarely objective means of confirming (Ussher & Dewberry, 1995).

The reliability of adults' memories of their childhood is a topic that is currently fuelling controversy about 'false memory syndrome' (FMS). The FMS societies argue that an adult's 'recovered' memories of child sexual abuse are an artefact of the therapeutic process and are not based on reality. That false memories can occur has to be recognised, as do the devastating consequences for those involved if accusations are made based on false memories (McCullough, 1996). Concern has been expressed that the publicity generated by the FMS societies is creating a social climate where disclosures are not believed (Toon, Fraise, Fetridge & Alwin, 1996). However, there is no evidence to suggest that children's disclosures are being treated with more scepticism as a result.

With reference to gender differences, Kelly et al. (1991) estimated that young women were two to three times more likely to be abused in childhood than young males. Again the reliability of such results can be questioned given that there are reasons why boys may under-report their experiences. Their reticence has been assumed to reflect that boys are often socialised not to reveal doubts, weaknesses or fears and that, as the



majority of boys' abusers are male, boys have to contend with the homosexuality taboo which may lead to powerful repression of the experience with a subsequent failure to report (Faller, 1989).

With reference to the estimated age of onset of sexual victimisation, the NSPPC (1989) discovered that the mean age of abused males on the child abuse register in one British city was eight years, six months (with a range from 2 to 17 years), and the mean age for abused girls was ten years, eight months (with a range from 1 to 17 years). Other sources support these findings: for example, Peake (1992) found that 60 per cent of professional consultations of a 'child sexual abuse consultation service' pertained to children under ten years, a further 20 per cent of which related to pre-school children. Two points should be borne in mind: First, the mean ages reported above largely reflect the age at which professionals identified a child as a victim of abuse. This is not necessarily the same as the age of onset; abuse may have started much earlier but remained concealed for many years. Second, statistics from child protection registers and clinical samples cannot tell us anything about those children whose experiences remain undetected. However, when adult survivors of sexual abuse are asked about age of onset, the results are not so different. For example, a recent British survey recruited 775 female survivors via an advertisement in a woman's magazine and discovered that the average age of onset of sexual abuse was reported at eight years, five months (Ussher & Dewberry, 1995). As onset of abuse usually occurs under the age of ten, it indicates that those professionals most likely to be exposed to these children on a daily basis will be their primary school teachers.

### ***1.3. The Unique Position of Primary School Teachers***

Professionals who have daily contact with the same children are argued to be uniquely placed to detect changes in behaviour, mood or attainment that may indicate abuse (Maher, 1987; Baxter & Beer, 1990). Teachers can place their observations of individuals in the context of what they know about child development, in what they know about that particular child in other contexts, and in relation to his or her peer group (Peake, 1991). Most teachers also have the skills to communicate in a language that the child will understand. Young children often make veiled references to abusive experiences or re-enact encounters in their play, or in stories, diaries, poems, pictures and so-on that school staff are well placed to observe. Conversely, the lack of imaginative play that is sometimes associated with children who have been subject to prolonged trauma (Mollon, 1996), is also likely to come to the attention of teachers. Of course, just because teachers are well placed does not ensure that they will be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. However, one study that asked 568 teachers about the recognition of child abuse, discovered that 74 per cent had suspected a pupil of being abused at one time or another (Abrahams, Casey & Daro, 1992). Such statistics cannot tell us what proportion of those suspicions reflected actual cases and what proportion were revealed as unfounded.

### ***1.4. Recognition of Child Sexual Abuse***

Recognition of child sexual abuse first depends on society's readiness to entertain the possibility that such a phenomena exists. In 1988 a US national survey of 22,000 teachers reported that 89 per cent of respondents recognised child abuse as a problem in their schools (Carnegie Foundation, 1988). Webster (1991) surveyed British



primary school teachers (sample size=39) and discovered that 88 per cent of teachers felt they had some role to play in the area of child sexual abuse. Such figures suggest that previous claims about "the great reluctance on the part of teachers to open their minds to the knowledge that children can be abused" (Burton, 1988) may be rejected.

The next step towards recognition is an individual's inherent willingness to confront the discomfort that contemplation of the topic inevitably brings (Wurtele & Miller-Perrin, 1992). Opportunities to explore personal reactions, share myths and assumptions are provided for, and valued by, professionals such as social workers and health professionals (Bledin & Hunt, 1993), but there is no evidence that such opportunities are demanded by, or prioritised for, teachers.

Finally, as child sexual abuse is a crime with little medical or forensic proof, recognition relies on professionals being able to recognise signs and symptoms that are indicative of abuse. (Stern, 1987). Some clinicians claim that child victims of sexual abuse will always try to communicate the abuse in some way to an adult which implies that the onus is on the adult to comprehend the communication (Furniss, 1991). Teachers may be alerted by a child's behaviour, by an accusation of another, or by the child's own attempts at disclosure. Whether a professional interprets a child's behaviour as indicative of abuse is likely to depend, in part, on whether they have had any training in recognising signs and symptoms. A US study revealed that 76 per cent of a sample of 440 teachers reported 'no awareness' of child sexual abuse indicators (McIntyre, 1987). In a smaller US study, Baxter & Beer (1990) reported that 98 per cent of their sample (sample size 49) said they had received no formal training



regarding child abuse and neglect. The problem of diagnosing child sexual abuse from particular behavioural manifestations is discussed later. What follows is a description of some intrapsychic and interactional dynamics associated with childhood trauma, that highlight both the opportunities for professionals in regular contact with children to recognise a child's communications of distress, and the potential for professionals to get drawn into processes that are both confusing and upsetting for all concerned.

#### *1.4.1. Psychodynamics of child sexual abuse*

Psychoanalysts have described a number of defence mechanisms which frequently develop when anxiety generated by internal conflict threatens to overwhelm. Freud (1926) described how people, when under extreme stress, tend to *regress*; in other words they behave as though they were younger. This is likely to be a frequent observation of teachers who will have noticed, often to their frustration, that a young child may lose a newly acquired skill during a time of family conflict. Alternatively, the child's feelings about the conflict may become *displaced* and unleashed in unexpected situations. For example, a child may be subject to abusive experiences at home but, having no outlet for her distress and anger, may tend to express her feelings with full force following a minor, and unrelated, incident at school. Such an outburst, if not understood, is likely to elicit a punitive rather than sympathetic response in teachers. Freud (1914) also described the *compulsion to repeat* distressing experiences. This refers to an individual's tendency to place themselves in high risk situations where, for example abuse, punishment or rejection may be re-played. The unconscious intention to repeat traumatic experiences is thought to be an attempt to understand and master the initial experience. Professionals working with abused children often describe

feeling tested, provoked and pushed to their limits by abused children (MacVicar, 1979). Albeit not deliberately, the child may be setting up a situation to prove his or her assumption that trust is impossible. Professionals may, unwittingly, respond and react in unhelpful ways. The consequences of further rejection risk confirming the abused child's only secure reality: that they are deserving of rejection (Summit, 1983).

Anna Freud, who worked extensively with children, first described the defence mechanism of *identification with the aggressor* (Freud, A., 1936). This refers to the tendency of abused children to internalise a part of themselves that has identified with their abuser. To counter the intense vulnerability and helplessness that results from victimisation, the child may restore her power by exhibiting aggressive behaviour towards children smaller than herself. While this defence mechanism may successfully protect the child from fully experiencing the horror of her own victimisation, it will not protect others reacting to the child's disturbing behaviour with sanctions and further punishment.

*Splitting* and *Projection* are other defences that function to keep intolerable feelings at bay (Klein, 1952). For example, a child may idealise her abuser in an (unconscious) attempt to avoid feeling the force of her ambivalent feelings towards him. However, it is the negative side of the ambivalence that is likely to be the most challenging to professionals. Fear and hatred do not disappear and are likely to be split off and located (projected) in someone else who is then seen as 'the baddie'.

*Acting-out* is one of the psychoanalytic terms in common usage and is pertinent to any discussion of interactional dynamics with abused children. For many children the trauma of child sexual abuse happened at a time when they did not have the words with which to make sense of the experience. The child is left with little choice but to communicate their turmoil via, often unacceptable, behaviour. Trowell (1995), a psychiatrist working in a psychotherapeutic context, explains that children who have been sexually victimised struggle with powerful feelings that they need others to understand, verbalise and, above all, tolerate. While it is not appropriate for teachers to be therapists, it is appropriate for teachers to have access to theoretical models which offer explanations about why abused children may display such disturbed behaviour. This may help them understand and tolerate the child's feelings.

There is some empirical support for an association of child sexual abuse with particular behavioural manifestations which will be briefly reviewed.

#### *1.4.2. Association of behavioural disturbance and child sexual abuse*

Over the course of one year, 411 child cases on the local authority sexual abuse register for greater Manchester were studied with a view to compiling a breakdown of their problem behaviour. It was reported that 32 per cent demonstrated 'school problems', 25 per cent sexualised play, 16 per cent aggressive and destructive behaviour, 16 per cent withdrawn and compliant behaviour, 13 per cent lack of trust, 12 per cent social isolation, 11 per cent running away, ten per cent excessive masturbation, nine per cent bedwetting, eight per cent sleep disturbances, five per cent eating problems and nine per cent 'other' (NSPCC, 1989).



There are several difficulties with the interpretation of such results. Firstly, there is no evidence to prove that such behavioural difficulties are a direct result of the abuse *per se*; child sexual abuse does not always result in, for example, eating problems, nor are eating problems necessarily an indication of abuse. There is no way of determining which behaviours reflect child sexual abuse and which are symptoms of wider dysfunctional family dynamics (Mullen, Romans-Clarkson, Walton & Herbison, 1988). Secondly the categories are unlikely to be mutually exclusive; for example approximately one third of children with sleep disturbances will also show other behavioural difficulties (Douglas, 1992). Thirdly, the largest category of 'school problems' would be more helpful if it were defined; it is not clear whether it refers to educational under-achievement, truancy, bullying or any of the other problems schools commonly face. Precise information, such as abused children being more sensitive to, and disrespectful of, authority than their peers (Smith, 1995), has clearer implications for teachers that can be more constructively addressed.

The remaining categories from the Manchester survey (perhaps with the exception of compliant and withdrawn behaviour) are also likely to constitute school problems as far as school personnel are concerned. Despite the criticisms, it is clear that these 411 children were presenting disturbed behaviour of some sort that was likely to be challenging to their caretakers, including their teachers.

Figures from a London LEA also support the relationship between childhood trauma and educational under-achievement. Over the course of one year, 80 per cent of all the girls who were referred to an educational psychology department for school-related

problems were discovered to be known by Social Services to have been abused (Malcolm, personal communication, 1996). Secondary services that offer psychological treatment to abused children, consistently report a correlation between sexual victimisation and behavioural or educational disturbance. For example, MacVicar (1979) found that the most common symptoms in young children who had been abused were: first, phobias; second, behaviour disturbance and third, learning difficulties.

Watkins & Bentovim (1992) criticise the majority of child sexual abuse studies for failing to undertake a gender analysis. They hypothesise that boys and girls react differently to sexual abuse, with boys more likely to 'externalise' their distress and girls more likely to 'internalise' it. They propose that this has implications for support for the children since the withdrawn responses more typical of girls, tend to elicit more concern than the acting-out responses more typical of boys. However, in the context of a busy classroom where one adult attends to the needs of 30 individual children, it is likely that the boys who "make trouble, get results" (Malcolm & Guishard, 1993) at the expense of the quiet and withdrawn girls who risk being overlooked.

One study included both gender and developmental analysis and had the advantage of employing a standardised behavioural check list to measure behavioural disturbance. Friedrich, Urquiza & Beilke (1986) studied 85 child victims of sexual abuse between the ages of three and 12, to determine if any of the characteristics of the abuse (e.g.; age of onset, duration, identity of perpetrator etc.) were associated with particular behavioural disturbances. Their categories of behavioural disturbance included



internalised and externalised behaviour. Internalised referred specifically to fearful, inhibited, depressed and over-controlled behaviour, whereas externalised referred to aggressive, anti-social and uncontrolled behaviour. They measured these behavioural manifestations with the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL, Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983).

In a normative sample, two per cent of children would be expected to score above the threshold for disturbed behaviour. In their sample, 35 per cent of the boys and 46 per cent of the girls had scores above the threshold for the internalised behaviour category, 36 per cent of boys and 39 per cent of girls scored above the threshold for the externalised behaviour category. This does not bear out the hypothesis that girls and boys have significantly different behavioural reactions. However, when age was taken into account, a significant correlation was found: the younger the child (of either sex), the more likely they were to exhibit internalised behaviour and the older the child the more likely they were to exhibit externalised behaviour. This has implications for detection of abuse by nursery and primary school teachers who may not intuitively associate withdrawn and non-disruptive behaviour with possible abuse.

Results from this study need to be interpreted with some caution due to the fact that the sample size was quite small and that the sample was drawn from a clinical population. This limits the extent to which results can be generalised to non-clinical populations as it is likely that those children exhibiting more problem behaviour will be those referred to clinics in the first place. Also, the majority of children investigated did not demonstrate behaviour above the threshold.

In diagnosing child sexual abuse from allegedly characteristic behaviours, it is critically important to recognise that the defence mechanisms and particular behaviours discussed above can be reactions to many difficulties that children face apart from child sexual abuse. As there is no evidence that all child victims of child sexual abuse will react in these ways, there is no way of knowing unequivocally, when a child's behaviour is indicative of child sexual abuse. Furthermore, challenging behaviour is sometimes short lived indicating a need to re-assess it at a second point in time in order to eliminate the possibility of behaviour change reflecting developmental changes rather than specifically child sexual abuse (Fielding, 1992).

Whatever their cause, we know that children's behavioural disturbances present schools with a challenge (Dowling, 1994) and are often reported by teachers as the main source of their general occupational stress (Pratt, 1978).

There are also risks for the long term outcome for the child. Trowell & Bower (1995) state that in an increasingly competitive educational system, children with behaviour problems are "not good for business; their educational attainments are likely to be poor and their disruptive behaviour will tarnish the school's reputation".

#### *1.4.3. Recognition via disclosures*

Disclosure has been defined as "the process whereby the abuse is brought to the attention of someone else besides the child and his or her abuser" (Jones & McQuiston, 1986). Disclosure can be via direct statements from the child (purposeful disclosure), or from allegations from another (accidental disclosure). The vast majority of on-

going abuse remains undisclosed until adulthood (Finkelhor, 1979). However, children appear to tell their experiences if they are able to locate an adult whom they feel will believe them and not blame them (Glaser & Frosh, 1993). The assurance of confidentiality, as is the policy with helplines such as Childline, also seems to enable children to tell more freely.

In 1995, Childline received 11,000 calls from children about sexual abuse (Rickford 1995, *The Guardian*). The reasons that children provide for not wanting to be identified include: fear of prosecution of the abuser, their own reluctance to go to court, their fear of being put in care or splitting up the family, fear of intimidation and increased threats from abuser, fear of not being believed and a wish to protect their mothers and families (Glaser & Frosh 1993). Of course, while teachers can appreciate the child's ambivalence about disclosing, they cannot ensure confidentiality. Nevertheless, in one small British study (Houlihan, 1990), 34 adult survivors of child sexual abuse were asked who they first disclosed to: after a confidential crisis line, teachers were the professionals most likely to receive disclosures.

Children may be enormously ambivalent about telling (on the one hand they may wish to terminate the abuse but on the other they may be terrified of the consequences) which can result in their initial disclosures being tentative and prone to retraction. In one American study, Sorensen & Snow (1991) analysed the case notes of 116 children (aged 3-17 years) referred to clinics following confirmed sexual abuse. They found that 22 per cent of the children retracted previous disclosures. This number is reported to be up to 33 per cent when the child is a victim of incest (Faller, 1989). Retraction



can be seen as an escape from the pending crisis (for the child and her family) that disclosure precipitates. It appears that it is rarely, if ever, a communication that the original disclosure was untrue. In the Sorensen & Snow sample, 92 per cent of the children who retracted later re-affirmed their original disclosure.

At the precarious stage of disclosures, having an adult available to acknowledge the child's experience and to clearly fix responsibility on the perpetrating adult may prevent the child retracting. A consistent finding from retrospective research is that, regardless of the severity of child sexual abuse, long term recovery is related to disclosures having been taken seriously, and the child having been supported by a significant adult through the subsequent investigation (Wyatt & Powell, 1989). Teachers who receive disclosures are in a good position to offer important continuity of care.

With reference to age differences, Sorensen & Snow (1991) found that of the 25 per cent of children in their sample who disclosed, a significant majority were adolescents. Factors that precipitate disclosure in this age group include the onset of a sexual peer relationship or fears that a younger sibling or child is being abused (Glaser & Frosh, 1993). However, studies are by no means consistent; another study that analysed records of 72 paediatric referrals of suspected child sexual abuse, found that the average age at which children purposefully disclosed was ten years (Campis, Hebden-Curtis & Demaso, 1993). Of course, the average age of children who disclosed has to relate to the age range of the sample under investigation.

In the Sorensen & Snow study, the few primary school age children who purposefully disclosed did so following educational awareness programmes at their school. It is consistently found that the implementation of child educational programmes increases the rate of disclosures (KIDSCAPE, 1994). This has led some educational psychologists to advise schools not to implement such programmes unless they have well prepared back-up both in terms of the on-going professional help the child will require and the advice and support the teachers will need (Malcolm, 1996, personal communication).

### ***1.5. The Emotional Impact of Working with Abused Children***

While it is recognised that there are different issues and concerns for different agencies (the statutory responsibility for child protection that social workers carry being particularly burdensome), the following section describes some reactions that any professional working in close contact with abused children may experience.

Sexuality itself is a topic that arouses excitement, embarrassment, confusion or inhibition in most adults (Glaser & Frosh, 1993). Contemplation of the sexuality of children is likely to be even more uncomfortable. When this is in the context of sexual abuse, adults may react with denial, panic or confusion (Peake, 1992). It may activate anger, repulsion, fantasies of retribution, as well as the wish to rescue the victim (Furniss, 1991). If unacknowledged, these strong feelings can interfere with effective working, and the consequent frustration and anger can permeate personal lives (Bledin & Hunt, 1993). Furthermore, the inevitable media attention that is generated whenever there have been failed attempts to protect children from abuse, fosters a



culture of constant scrutiny which increases the stress on professionals (Reder, Duncan, Gray, 1993). With the high prevalence of child sexual abuse, it is inevitable that some professionals will themselves have been abused in childhood. This may heighten the worker's sensitivity to the child's needs but, if their abuse remains unresolved, it is also likely to generate powerful identifications with the child and overwhelming anger at the abuser which may not be in the child's best interests.

The lack of professional confidence that such work can inspire (Furniss, 1991) appears to manifest itself in anxieties about reporting suspicions. In Abraham's et al. (1992) study of 568 teachers, respondents identified potential barriers to reporting cases of child sexual abuse which in ten per cent of the cases actually prevented them from doing so. The most often quoted barrier was 'insufficient knowledge about detection', followed by 'fear of legal ramifications of false allegations', 'fear of parental denial and disapproval of reports', 'fear that they would be judged as interfering with private family affairs' and 'lack of community or school support'. Other common barriers to reporting are teachers' lack of confidence in social and legal services and their dilemma between reporting suspicions and maintaining confidentiality (Wurtele et al., 1992). The obvious implications for the child of not reporting suspicious behaviour is that a chance to terminate their sexual victimisation may be missed. The long term psychological effects of child sexual abuse are known to be more severe and intractable when abuse is of a longer duration (Peters, 1988). The professionals' dilemma rests on their knowledge that suspicions can be unfounded. If unfounded suspicions are acted on (despite the professionals' best intentions), the child will be subjected to unnecessary medical examination and -if the case goes to court- the effects are likely to

be particularly traumatic for the child and family. The implications for the professional in such an event include the likelihood of suffering considerable guilt and regret. The enormity of this dilemma for professionals may result in a professional 'paralysis' that resembles the child's dilemma about whether or not to disclose. This is illustrated by the following quote:

*Skilful and experienced social workers, respected for their competence with other, more complex cases, have in a case of child abuse omitted to take even the most basic and routine steps...The picking up of violent feelings can make workers immobile, impotent and confused*

(Braun, 1988 p27)

Fortunately, recognition of such dynamics and the implications for the child's protection, have resulted in support and supervision for social workers. However, it is likely that other professionals will be subject to similar dynamics and those with few opportunities to talk through concerns, may be at particular risk of becoming overwhelmed.

#### *1.5.1. Teachers' Role in the multi-disciplinary management of child sexual abuse*

That teachers have some role has been registered by the government in *Working together for the protection of children from abuse* (DHSS, 1988). In addition, the DES circulated a document to every school which stated that teachers "should be alert to all signs of abuse....as part of their pastoral responsibilities" (DES, 1988). Although there were recommendations about how "cases of suspected or identified abuse (should) be properly considered and pursued", there was no indication that improved training or support would be necessary. Indeed, the document announced that the

proposals "should not have significant additional financial or manpower consequences."

As mentioned earlier, the idea that training can equip teachers with knowledge about which signs and symptoms are indicative of abuse is simplistic. However, this does not imply that training is of no benefit. Training may raise awareness to the dilemmas and dynamics for the child, family and the professional systems; in the absence of any training, teachers must struggle with these sensitive issues intuitively (Braun, 1988).

With reference to in-service training, the DES document states that additional training is appropriate only for the senior teacher designated as having special responsibility who could then disseminate the information to all school staff. Some teachers expressed dissatisfaction with this arrangement, feeling that it risked divorcing the rest of the staff from the issue and from much needed training (Webster, 1991).

### ***1.6. Stress, 'Burn-out' and Coping***

Stress and coping are both informal constructs in daily usage and highly technical terms that have attracted a long history of research. Stress has been defined as the process that results when demands outstrip resources (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Stress is the product of an accumulation of different sources which interact with a person's 'internal' and 'external' resources (Parker & Endler, 1996). Internal resources which buffer the effects of stress and enhance coping include the type of coping strategies employed (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and an individuals' attributional style (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). Other psychological constructs, such as



self-esteem (Cohen & Wills, 1985), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), and perceived confidence (Glidewell & Livert, 1995) have also been examined as buffers against work stress. External resources include social support, and, in occupational settings, training, supervision and financial rewards. Support has been consistently identified as an important buffer in work settings (Bowden, 1990). Indeed, support at work has been found to ameliorate work strain more effectively than a supportive home environment (Maslach & Jackson, 1992). 'Support at work' is a vague construct but the important elements seem to be: access to information, feedback and opportunities to enhance self-esteem (Cohen & Wills, 1985). It seems to be the *perceived* adequacy of support, rather than the quantity of support *per se*, that is the important ameliorative factor (Lazarus, 1992).

'Burn-out' is a term used in occupational contexts to describe the effects of chronic stress and emotional drain that arise from the intrinsic demands of caring for people. However, there is some disagreement about the validity of the constructs measured by Burn-out inventories. Some researchers suggest that as burn-out correlates highly with rates of depression, it may be measuring the same construct (Schonfeld, 1992). With reference to the causal connection between stressors and distress, Schonfeld proposes that:

*Teachers with pre-existing depressive symptoms, because of impaired interpersonal skills, may create classroom environments conducive to student rule breaking, a suspected stressor.*

(Schonfeld, 1992.p270)

Others argue that depressive symptoms do not correlate with burn-out (Bowden, 1994) and assert that the latter is a specific measure of work place stress. These arguments have important implications for where to locate interventions for change. McCullough & O'Brien (1986) have warned against focusing on the psychological make-up of individuals which indicate interventions at individual levels such as counselling. As burn-out occurs only in occupational settings, the implication is that interventions need to go beyond individual solutions to include organisational changes (Bowden, 1994).

The interventions that the child sexual abuse literature repeatedly advise in order to buffer the inevitable stress and protect against burn-out are training and support:

*The best defence [against overwhelming emotional reactions] you have is knowledge and understanding of the problem; to gain this you need to be prepared to listen and to have a clear idea of the process you become involved in.*  
(Kenward, 1987).

*Without a theoretical structure to identify with...it is not possible to engage with the world of the child.....without becoming overwhelmed and engulfed in their anxieties and fears .*  
(Bradley, 1995).

With reference to effective coping with such work, Furniss (1991) claims that resources must cover six areas. First, the central importance of having at least one colleague with whom to share suspicions and with whom to work out the potential confusion between what are real concerns, and what is fantasy. Second, supervision or peer discussion to prevent the unrealistic fears and rescue fantasies that can result from

emotionally draining work. Third, opportunities for inter-professional support forums where mistakes can be admitted, doubts can be explored and responsibilities can be shared. Fourth, opportunities for individual professionals to identify their own personal limits which must not be over-stepped. Fifth, opportunities to reflect and discuss personal reactions to issues relating to sexuality and sexual abuse. Finally, Furniss warns that effective multi-professional management of child sexual abuse requires attention to defining and understanding different professional roles.

Role ambiguity is a well documented element of occupational stress (Tetrick, 1992) and a problem frequently referred to in relation to the multi-disciplinary management of child sexual abuse (Furniss, 1991). When teachers are asked about their role in relation to working with abused children, they are unclear whether their responsibility is primarily that of preventing abuse, identifying abuse, monitoring suspicions or supporting the child and family (Peake, 1991).

#### *1.6.1. Teacher Stress and burn-out literature*

In an American survey of 11,067 professionals, Maslach & Jackson (1993) reported that teachers (n=4,163) tended to have higher degrees of burn-out than their contemporaries in the social services (n=1,583) and health services (n=1,834). Teachers had higher mean scores of emotional exhaustion, that is they felt more tired and emotionally drained by their work, had substantially higher scores of depersonalisation in that they had less positive feelings towards the recipients of their care, and finally had lower scores of personal accomplishment, that is they felt less satisfied with their occupational achievements.



Although research into teacher stress in Britain stretches as far back as the 1930s (Leach, 1984), there has been a re-emergence of interest in the topic over the past decade with reports that teachers are experiencing more stress than ever before. Cox, Boot, Cox & Harrison (1988) compared stress in 100 school teachers and 100 semi-professionals matched for age, gender and marital status. When asked "what are the main sources of stress in your life?" 79 per cent of school teachers, compared to 35 per cent of non-teachers, reported that work was their main source of stress.

Pratt (1978) surveyed primary school teachers and identified that the four most stressful factors were: generally feeling unable to cope with teaching problems, non co-operative children, concern for children's learning, and children's aggressive behaviour.

These studies are a little dated since the education system and the day-to-day lives of individual primary school teachers have been subject to major recent changes (Timmins, 1995). While the four factors identified above are likely to be of continuing relevance, many other demands are faced by primary school teachers in the UK in the 1990s: The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced radical changes in education that resulted in the National Curriculum, the local management of schools, increased assessment and league tables of pupils' examination results. In effect a market system has been introduced into education which has encouraged more competition between schools, and also greater public accountability.

### ***1.7. Summary***

The current study focuses on one of many potential occupational stressors for teachers: working with abused children. That such work is emotionally draining is well documented and has resulted in training and support being prioritised for some professionals in order to mediate against the inevitable stress, and minimise the risk of burn-out. It is recognised that teachers are a group of professionals subject to many occupational stressors that may accumulate to put them at particular risk of burn-out.

### ***1.8. Aims of the Current Study***

The current study had three main aims. First, to generate descriptive data on the number and nature of primary school teachers' experiences of working with abused children. Second, to investigate whether the perceived adequacy of training and support, and the levels of occupational stress were related to teachers' identification of abuse and their perceived ability to cope with such cases. Third, to capture through individual interviews the subjective meaning of teachers' experiences with abused children. In addition to these main aims, a preliminary aim was to analyse the demographic details of the sample to ensure that they were not exerting significant effects on the main outcome variables under investigation. It could be speculated that two of the demographic variables (years employed in education, and number of children in class) were likely to be related to identification of abused children because of the increased exposure to children.

## **1.9. Terminology**

### **1.9.1. Identification of child sexual abuse**

Cases of suspected abuse and cases of disclosed abuse were inquired about separately in order to discover whether they were subject to differential effects in relation to the variables under investigation. Limiting the current study to these cases will result in some of teachers' experiences with abused children being over-looked: teachers will occasionally have pupils in their class who are known to be on the child protection register but have been identified by other sources. There is no suggestion that such children are less worthy of attention, nor that they pose no challenge to their teachers.

Instructing teachers to include only those cases that fulfilled specific criteria risked losing information about teachers' encounters with less definable cases (especially suspected cases), therefore a decision was made not to impose a definition of child sexual abuse in the current study.

### **1.9.2. Perceived ability to cope**

The current study asked teachers: *how well do you think you would cope with cases of abuse should they arise in your classroom*. It was necessary to ask a hypothetical question in order to include the views of teachers who had no experience of teaching abused children. It was recognised that perceptions of coping would be highly subjective and would be influenced by various internal and external factors.



### *1.9.3. Perceived adequacy of training and support*

Respondents were asked whether they thought their training had adequately prepared them for dealing with child sexual abuse, and whether they thought the support available for teachers was adequate. While some data was collected on the objective amount of training and support provided, the intention was to explore whether a respondent's *perception* of how well prepared she feels, is a variable that influences the identification of abuse, and the perceived ability to cope.

### *1.9.4 Emotional impact of working with abused children*

The emotional impact of working with cases of suspected or disclosed abuse was assessed by asking: *How involved did you feel with the emotional distress of your pupil?*, and, *Looking back, how stressful did you find this experience?* (clearly, only relevant if participants had encountered child sexual abuse). The subjective definition of these constructs were explored during individual interviews with teachers.

### *1.9.5. Burn-Out*

Burn-out was assessed using the Maslach Burn-out Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1993) which measures the following three components: *depersonalisation* which refers to the development of negative, cynical and unfeeling attitudes towards clients, *emotional exhaustion* which refers to an increasing lack of emotional investment in one's work and, reduced *personal accomplishment* which refers to a sense of growing dissatisfaction with one's work achievements.

### **1.10. Hypothesis**

Hypotheses are stated in the null form because of the exploratory nature of the study.

1. There will be no relationship between whether teachers harbour suspicions of abuse and:

- a) perceived adequacy of *initial teacher training* in relation to child sexual abuse,
- b) perceived adequacy of *in-service training* in relation to child sexual abuse.
- c) perceived adequacy of *emotional support* available in relation to child sexual abuse,
- d) perceived adequacy of *practical advice* available in relation to child sexual abuse.
- e) reported levels of *depersonalisation*,
- f) reported levels of *emotional exhaustion*,
- g) reported levels of *personal accomplishment*.

2. There will be no relationship between whether teachers receive disclosures of abuse and:

- a) perceived adequacy of *initial teacher training* in relation to child sexual abuse,
- b) perceived adequacy of *in-service training* in relation to child sexual abuse.
- c) perceived adequacy of *emotional support* available in relation to child sexual abuse,
- d) perceived adequacy of *practical advice* available in relation to child sexual abuse.
- e) reported levels of *depersonalisation*,
- f) reported levels of *emotional exhaustion*,
- g) reported levels of *personal accomplishment*.

3. There will be no relationship between whether teachers think they could cope with suspicions of abuse and:

- a) perceived adequacy of *initial teacher training* in relation to child sexual abuse,
- b) perceived adequacy of *in-service training* in relation to child sexual abuse.
- c) perceived adequacy of *emotional support* available in relation to child sexual abuse,
- d) perceived adequacy of *practical advice* available in relation to child sexual abuse.

- e) reported levels of *depersonalisation*,
- f) reported levels of *emotional exhaustion*,
- g) reported levels of *personal accomplishment*.

4. There will be no relationship between whether teachers think they could cope with disclosures of abuse and:

- a) perceived adequacy of *initial teacher training* in relation to child sexual abuse,
- b) perceived adequacy of *in-service training* in relation to child sexual abuse.
- c) perceived adequacy of *emotional support* available in relation to child sexual abuse,
- d) perceived adequacy of *practical advice* available in relation to child sexual abuse.
- e) reported levels of *depersonalisation*,
- f) reported levels of *emotional exhaustion*,
- g) reported levels of *personal accomplishment*.

### ***1.11. Research Questions***

Qualitative data was analysed with the following questions in mind:

1. What factors do participants identify as influencing their perceived ability to cope with cases of child sexual abuse (suspected or disclosed)?
2. What factors do participants identify as influencing the degree to which they feel emotionally involved in the distress of such children?
3. What factors do participants identify as influencing the amount of stress they associate with having taught such children?

(Questions 2 and 3 were obviously only asked if participants had encountered abused children)



## **2. METHOD**

### ***2.1 Design***

#### ***2.1.1 Stage I***

Stage I employed a cross-sectional postal survey design to generate descriptive data about the number and nature of primary school teachers' experiences with abused children. This data was used to investigate the six hypotheses.

#### ***2.1.2 Stage II***

The method chosen for gathering qualitative data was that of individual interviews (Wiseman, 1978). Interviews, conducted according to a semi-structured protocol, explored the experiences of a self-selected sub-sample of participants in more depth. The verbal material generated was analysed using aspects of 'content analysis' (Ranyard & Williamson, 1996), in order to address the three research questions posed.

### ***2.2. Participants***

The 45 participants of the main study were primary school teachers (including six school head teachers) recruited from five different sources (for recruitment details and response rates, see Procedure). For demographic details of the main study sample, see Table 1 overleaf.



Table 1: Demographic details of sample

Mean Age (n=43)	Gender (n=44)	Couple Status (n=41)	Mean no. of Children (n=45)	Ethnicity (n=44)	Teaching Qualification (n=44)	Mean Yrs employed in Ed' (n=44)	Class Size (n=43)
$\bar{X}$ = 41 yrs Range 23-62	Female: 93% (n= 41)  Male: 7% (n=3)	Married:46% (n=19) Single: 41% (n=17) Couple: 12% (n= 5)	$\bar{X}$ =1.04 Range 0-3	White: 98% (n=43) Other: 2% (n=1)	Cert.Ed: 27% (n=12) PGCE: 24% (n=11) B.Ed: 22% (n=10) Multiple: 13% (n=5) Other: 14% (n=6)	$\bar{X}$ =16 years  Range: 6 mnths-43 yrs	20 to 30: 57% (n=25) > 30: 32% (n=14) 10 to 20: 4.5% (n=2) < 10: 4.5% (n=2)

## 2.3. Measures

### 2.3.1 Demographic Information Sheet (Appendix I)

Information regarding: age, gender, ethnicity, marriage/couple status, number of children, type of teaching qualification, number of years employed in Education and size of class currently taught was obtained via an eight item *respondent information* section on the front sheet of questionnaire one.

### 2.3.2. Questionnaire One: A Survey of teachers' experiences of working with children who may have been abused (Appendix I).

This instrument was designed by the author as a result of a literature review and from suggestions and feedback from three primary school teachers, one head teacher and one teacher trainer. A pilot study was carried out on an independent sample of ten primary school teachers to test the face validity of the questionnaire and to estimate the time of completion. Feedback was collected on an additional form (Appendix II). Three pilot participants volunteered to re-complete the questionnaire after a two week period. There was a 95 per cent agreement rate which suggested test-retest reliability



was adequate. Participants reported that the questionnaire took, on average, 20 minutes to complete.

The final version of the Teacher Survey consisted of 34 items in relation to child sexual abuse which were organised around the following themes:

- Initial teacher training
- In-service training
- Perceived ability to cope
- Number of suspicions harboured / disclosures received over teaching career
- Emotional impact of teaching cases of suspected / disclosed child sexual abuse
- Emotional support for teachers
- Practical advice for teachers
- 'Any-other-comments'.

Responses were reported via a combination of 4-point Likert scales (alternated to minimise response bias), and forced-choice response sets. The type of data generated was a mixture of dichotomous, nominal, categorical and continuous.

### ***2.3.3 Questionnaire two: The Maslach Burn-out (MBI) Inventory Form Ed (Appendix III)<sup>1</sup>***

This is a well validated, 22-item, self-administered inventory designed to detect symptoms of "burn-out" in the teaching profession. It takes approximately ten minutes

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<sup>1</sup> Maslach & Jackson (1993) stress the importance of administering the MBI in a way that avoids sensitising participants to the general issues of burn-out, lest their personal beliefs about the concept bias their results. Therefore the MBI is administered as *The Educators Survey*.



to complete. The only modification of items in the MBI Form Ed (Maslach, Jackson & Schwab, 1986) from the original MBI (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) is the change of the word *recipient* to *student*.

The instrument measures each of the three aspects of the burn-out syndrome with separate sub-scales. Nine items assess the *emotional exhaustion* sub-scale. Five items assess the *depersonalisation* sub-scale, and eight items assess the *personal accomplishment* sub-scale.

The frequency with which respondents experience the symptoms of burn-out are assessed according to a seven-point response format ranging from *Never* to *Every day*. A high degree of burn-out is reflected in high scores on the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) and Depersonalisation (D) sub-scales and in low scores on the Personal Accomplishment (PA) subscale. Sub-scale scores are considered separately and are not combined into a total score. The respective cut-off points indicative of high, moderate and low degrees of burn-out according to the MBI (Form Ed) are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Cut-off scores for the three components of burn-out using the MBI FormEd

	<b>High</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>EE</b>	27 or over	17-26	0-16
<b>D</b>	14 or over	9-13	0-8
<b>PA</b>	0-30	31-36	37 or over

Internal consistency of the MBI Form Ed was tested with a sample of 469 teachers and generated the following coefficients (Cronbach's coefficient alpha): .90 (Emotional



Exhaustion), .76 (Depersonalisation), .76 (Personal Accomplishment) (Iwanicki & Schwab, 1981). Test-retest reliability coefficients of the MBI over a two to four week interval (n=53) were: .82 (Emotional Exhaustion), .60 (Depersonalisation), .80 (Personal Accomplishment). All coefficients were significant at the .001 level.

#### *2.3.4 Semi-Structured Interview Protocol (Appendix IV)*

The stage II interviews were conducted according to the following structure:

##### 1. Briefing

This section set the boundaries of the interview in relation to the following issues:

- approximate length of interview
- purpose of the research
- confirmation of consent
- right to withdraw from the interview at any point
- how material would be used in the write-up of the research
- anonymity and confidentiality
- reminder that summary of results could be requested.

##### 2. Interview

Interviews were conducted according to the semi-structured protocol. Participants were given an open-ended opportunity to expand on their responses to the Teacher Survey items that had addressed '*coping*', '*emotional involvement*', '*stress*' and '*any other comments*'.



### 3. De-briefing

This section inquired about participants' reactions to the interview and covered the following issues:

- feelings having completed the interview
- had the interview raised particular difficulties for them
- questions about how interview material would be used
- issues not covered that they would like to raise
- information given about seeking professional support if interview had generated distress
- information given about seeking professional advice if they needed to talk about concerns in relation to any pupil
- invitation to read interview notes and comment on their accuracy
- participants thanked for their time.



## *2.4. Procedure*

### *2.4.1. Ethical Approval*

A proposal of the current research was submitted to an independent ethic committee for scrutiny and approval. Approval was granted (Appendix V).

### *2.4.2. Original Recruitment Proposal*

The original recruitment plan (as outlined in the proposal), involved contacting approximately 40 schools in one London Education Authority (LEA1) to request permission from head teachers to distribute questionnaires in their respective schools. Head teachers were sent a standard letter (Appendix VI) and a copy of the questionnaire pack for scrutiny. Attention was drawn to the fact that the current research proposal had been approved by an ethics committee. A reply slip and a pre-paid envelope were provided for head teachers to indicate their decision about participation.

From the 40 schools targeted, 2 per cent returned the reply slip ( $n=1$ ) requesting a total of three questionnaire packs. These three questionnaires were subsequently completed and returned. Eighteen per cent of schools returned reply slips indicating their wish *not* to participate ( $n=7$ ), and the remaining 80 per cent of schools did not return the reply slips ( $n=32$ ).

The unexpectedly low response rate prompted an inquiry by the author in the hope of determining how to generate a more successful sample. It was discovered that one head teacher had contacted the authority Education Officer to find out if the current



research was known and approved by them. Subsequently, the Education Office had circulated a letter to all the primary schools in the borough recommending non-participation as the research was neither known to them nor endorsed by them. On receipt of this information the author telephoned the Education Officer to inquire about the procedure for acquiring Authority approval.

At this stage in the procedure it was decided to extend the recruitment source from the original one LEA to four additional LEAs. These LEAs were selected on the basis that they constituted all of the London LEAs that fell within the boundaries of the South East Thames Health Authority Region. Applications for Authority approval were then submitted to the five Education offices (Appendix VII). All five authorities subsequently approved the research (Appendices VIII to XII).

#### *2.4.3 Revised LEA Recruitment Procedure*

Fifty percent of the primary schools in each of the five LEAs were randomly selected (independent schools were excluded). This amounted to a total number of 179 schools (not including the 40 schools originally targeted in LEA1). The head teachers of these schools were sent an information pack containing the following:

- a) A standard covering letter<sup>2</sup> (Appendix XIII).
- b) A questionnaire pack to inspect.
- c) The relevant Education Office's letter of approval.

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<sup>2</sup> The head teachers in LEA 1 were sent a slightly different covering letter in order to clarify that authority approval had now been acquired. (Those 8 schools who had already returned reply slips indicating their wish not to participate were not contacted again).



d) A reply slip (with a pre-paid envelope for return) for the head teacher to indicate one of the following four options:

- request for more information before deciding to participate
- request for questionnaire packs to be sent in the post
- request that author gives a brief presentation and distributes questionnaires
- school declines to participate.

Head teachers who had not returned reply slips after approximately 6 weeks were sent a reminder letter (Appendix XV). One hundred and thirty reminder letters were sent (73%).

A total of five per cent of the head teachers from the 179 targeted (n=9) returned reply slips requesting questionnaire packs to be sent to their schools. A total of 33 questionnaire packs were requested between the nine schools, of which seventeen were subsequently completed and returned (response rate=51%). Forty one per cent of head teachers returned reply slips indicating that their schools did not wish to participate (n=73), one per cent of head teachers returned reply slips requesting more information about the research but did go on to participate (n=2), and the remaining 53 per cent of head teachers did not return reply slips (n=95).

Eighty six per cent of head teachers who returned reply slips indicating non-participation (n=63), outlined their reasons: 35 per cent (n=22) indicated that the reason for non-participation was due to general time or work pressures. Thirty two per cent of reasons (n=20) referred to time or work pressures due to OFSTED



inspections. Sixteen per cent of reasons (n=10) referred to there being no abused children in the school. Nine per cent of reasons (n=6) referred to the school being involved in other research projects. The final eight per cent of reasons (n=5) stated that the teachers did not wish to participate. For illustrations of the reasons given for non-participation, see Appendix XVI.

#### *2.4.4. Additional Recruitment Sources*

During the period of time waiting for LEA approval, attempts were made to recruit a sample from alternate sources.

##### 1. Adult Education Centre students

The manager of a private adult education centre agreed to display a poster inviting any primary school teachers who attended evening classes to participate in the research (Appendix XVII). A box of 30 questionnaire packs (each with pre-paid envelopes) was left below the poster for people to look at or take. Twenty questionnaire packs were taken and three were completed and returned. (Response rate =15 %)

##### 2. Primary School Head teacher Conference.

A head teacher who was aware of the current study offered to distribute questionnaire packs at a conference among her colleagues. A covering letter attached to each questionnaire (Appendix XVIII) included a reply slip for head teachers to indicate whether they would be prepared to distribute further questionnaires within their respective schools. Approximately twenty questionnaire packs were distributed. None were returned with requests for further questionnaire packs. However, six



questionnaire packs were completed by the head teachers themselves (response rate=30 %).

### 3. Primary school teachers known to friends or colleagues.

Approximately 90 questionnaire packs were distributed in person or by post to Primary school teachers known to friends or colleagues. Sixteen completed questionnaire packs were returned. (Response rate =18%)

## **2.5. Consent**

Consent for Stage I was requested via a front page information sheet attached to every questionnaire (Appendix XIX), which outlined the following information:

- estimated time involved for participation in stage I and stage II
- voluntary nature of participation.
- return of completed questionnaires regarded as consent to participate in stage I
- a guarantee of confidentiality.
- invitation to participate whether or not teachers had taught abused children.

Consent to stage II was obtained by the return of a completed consent form (Appendix XX) that was attached to the back of each questionnaire pack.

### **2.5.1 Participant Briefing for Stage I**

Participants who were recruited from the three additional sources were informed that their participation was informal, i.e., although the research had been granted ethical approval and approval from five LEAs in South London, a proposal had **not** been submitted to their LEA. The sample recruited from the adult education centre were



given this information via the poster that introduced the research, the head teacher conference were given this information in a covering letter that accompanied each questionnaire, and the sample recruited via an informal network were informed verbally.

Questionnaire packs were presented in the following format to all participants regardless of source:

- Top page: Information sheet
- Pages 1-7: Teacher Survey
- Pages 8-10: Continuation sheets for the above if required
- Page 11: Maslach Burn-out Inventory Form Ed
- Page 12: Consent form for participation in stage II
- Page 13: Return slip to request summary of the findings (Appendix XXI)  
(questionnaire packs included pre-paid envelopes for return)

## 2.6. Response Rate

Table 3 summarises the response rates from the five different recruitment sources.

Table 3: Response rates from the five different recruitment sources

	No of questionnaire packs requested	No of questionnaire packs returned	Percentage Response Rate
1. LEA1	3	3	100
2. Main LEA source	33	17	51
3. Adult Education Centre	20	3	15
4. Head teacher Conference	20	6	30
5. Informal Network	90	16	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>27</b>



### ***2.7. Stage II Procedure***

Participants who consented for participation in stage II were asked to leave a telephone number where they could be contacted in order to arrange an interview.

A total of ten respondents consented to participate. Seven were selected given the time constraints. Letters were sent to the three participants not selected (Appendix XXII). Six interviews were conducted at six respective schools and one interview was conducted at a participant's home. The average length of interview was 45 minutes.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic of child sexual abuse, interviews were not tape-recorded but written notes were taken by the author. In order to check the reliability of information gathered, participants were asked to read the notes at the end of the interview and comment on their accuracy.

Data from the interviews was subject to some organisation in preparation for analysis. Participants' responses had been recorded directly on to the interview protocol according to the following prompts:

1. Perceived ability to cope with:
  - a) cases of suspected abuse,
  - b) cases of disclosed abuse.
  
2. Emotional involvement in distress of child where there have been:
  - a) suspicions of abuse,
  - b) disclosures of abuse.

3. Stress associated with teaching children where there have been:

- a) suspicions of abuse,
- b) disclosures of abuse.

The material was then re-organised by collapsing comments that referred to cases of suspected abuse with those that referred to cases of disclosed abuse. This was done by simply typing out the interview transcripts and cutting them into individual comments. This resulted in a total of 45 individual comments. Each comment was then arranged into one of three categories. Envelopes with the category title on the front were used for storing the comments. The resulting categories were as follows:

- 1. Perceived ability to cope with cases of child sexual abuse,
- 2. Emotional involvement in distress of child thought or known to have been abused,
- 3. Stress associated with teaching a child thought or known to have been abused.

## **2.8. Statistical Analysis / Data Management**

### **2.8.1. Stage I**

Data from the Teacher Survey was treated as non-parametric in nature as most data sets, being categorical or dichotomous, did not fulfil the normal distribution parameter. Chi square analyses were used in the preliminary analysis of demographic variables and in relation to the six hypothesis. Twenty-four separate analyses were carried out on the hypotheses, therefore the level of significance was set at the one per cent level in order to prevent type one errors occurring. Results at the five per cent level were considered to approach significance. All analyses were two-tailed. Statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS for Windows Release 5.0 (Norisus, 1993).

### **2.8.2 Stage II**

Aspects of 'content analysis' (Ranyard & Williamson, 1996) were employed that incorporated some quantitative elements (Mason, 1994). Participants' responses to the questions about *coping* with abuse, degree of *emotional involvement* in the child's distress, and amount of *stress* associated with having taught a child thought or known to have been abused, were analysed according to the following stages:

1. Reading and re-reading comments in order to become familiar with the material.
2. A first level analysis involved 'dimensionalising' the three categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This level was subjected to inter-rater agreement.
3. A second level analysis involved identifying common themes within the 'dimensionalised' categories. This included counting the frequency with which themes emerged.



4. In the discussion, themes were drawn together in terms of an over-riding conceptual framework (Orford, 1992).

The 'any-other-comments' that participants offered during the interviews were combined with the 'any-other-comments' offered by participants during stage I. All comments were analysed in order to identify core themes. This process was subject to inter-rater agreement.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Preliminary Analysis of Demographic Variables

Preliminary analysis was undertaken to ensure that the demographic variables were not exerting a significant affect on the variables under investigation. 'Gender' and 'Ethnicity' were not suitable for analysis since 93% of the sample were female (n=41) and 98% identified themselves as 'white' (n=43). With regards to the remaining six demographic variables, no significant relationships were found (chi's ranged from .0143 to 3.457).

#### 3.2 Descriptive Data

Table 4: Participants' experiences of training (initial and in-service) in relation to child sexual abuse

	Initial Training number %		In-service Training number %	
<b>Hours of training received in relation to child sexual abuse</b>				
None	33	73	26	59
Between 1-2 hours	10	22	0	0
Over 3 hours	2	5	18	41
<b>Would you welcome more training?</b>				
Yes definitely	32	71	18	41
Yes Probably	11	24.5	22	50
Probably not	2	4.5	4	9

Table 4 shows the amount of initial and in-service training received in relation to child sexual abuse and participants' views about receiving more training.



Table 5: Availability of support (emotional support and practical advice) for teachers in relation to child sexual abuse

	Emotional Support		Practical Advice	
	number	%	number	%
<b>The importance of opportunities for support in relation to child sexual abuse</b>				
Extremely important	40	89	40	89
Somewhat important	5	11	4	9
Definitely not important	0	0	1	2
<b>Are there formal systems available in your school for support in relation to child sexual abuse?</b>				
Yes	8	18	15	33
No	37	82	30	67
<b>Are there informal systems available in your school for support in relation to child sexual abuse?</b>				
Yes	41	91	30	67
No	4	9	15	33

Table 5 shows participants' views about the importance of emotional support and practical advice in relation to child sexual abuse and the availability of such resources in their schools.

### *3.2.1. Descriptive data on the number and nature of suspicions of child sexual abuse*

Fifty-three per cent of the sample (n=24) had harboured suspicions of abuse over the course of their teaching careers to date (average length of employment was 16 years, with a range from six months to 43 years), while forty-seven per cent (n=21) had not.

The suspicions of abuse related to a total of 70 children. Taking the whole sample into account, this amounts to an average of 1.5 (SD=2.1) suspicions per participant over an average 16 years of teaching.



Of these 70 cases of suspected abuse, 50 per cent were girls (n=35) and 40 per cent were boys (n=28). For the remaining ten per cent of cases (n=7) no gender information was available.

Sixty-one per cent of these cases (n=43) were reported to head teachers, 23 per cent were not reported (n=16), and information was not available on the remaining 16 per cent (n=11).

Subsequent action was taken in 51 per cent of all the 70 cases of suspected abuse (n=36), the remaining 49 per cent (n=34) remained un-investigated at the time this data was collected.

The 70 cases of suspected abuse were associated with varying degrees of emotional involvement. Forty-six per cent of cases were associated with 'a fair bit' of emotional involvement in the child's distress (n=32), 29 per cent were associated with 'a great deal' (n=20) and the remaining 25 per cent were associated with 'a little' (n=18) involvement.

With regards to the stress reported, 47 per cent of cases were associated with 'considerable' stress (n=33), 30 per cent were associated with 'a little' (n=21), 13 per cent were associated with 'extreme' stress (n=9), and the remaining ten per cent were associated with 'no' stress (n=7).



### *3.2.2. Descriptive data on the number and nature of disclosures of child sexual abuse*

Twenty per cent of the entire sample (n=9) had received disclosures of abuse over the course of their teaching careers to date, while 80 per cent had not (n=36)

Disclosures of abuse were received from a total of 17 children. Taking the whole sample into account, this amounts to an average of 0.4 (SD=1.2) disclosures per participants, over an average 16 years of teaching.

Of these 17 cases of disclosed abuse, 76 per cent were girls (n=13) and 24 per cent were boys (n=4); all of these were reported to head teachers.

Subsequent action was taken in 65 per cent of cases (n=11), the remaining 35 per cent (n=6) were reported to have retracted their disclosure and remained un-investigated at the time this data was collected.

The 17 cases of suspected abuse were associated with varying degrees of emotional involvement and stress. Sixty-five per cent of cases (n=11) were associated with 'a great deal' of emotional involvement in the child's distress, 17.5 per cent were associated with 'a fair bit' (n=3) and the remaining 17.5 per cent were associated with 'a little' (n=3). With regards to the stress reported, 53 per cent of cases were associated with 'a little' stress (n=9), 35 per cent were associated with 'considerable' stress (n=6), and the remaining 12 per cent were associated with 'extreme' stress (n=2).

### 3.3 Hypotheses

#### 3.3.1. Hypothesis One

Table 6: Chi square analyses for hypothesis one

HYPOTHESIS 1.		Have you harboured suspicions?			
		yes		no	
		number	%	number	%
<b>a)</b> <b>Initial Teacher Training</b>	definitely adequate	0	0	0	0
	somewhat adequate	0	0	0	0
	not really adequate	5	11.36	6	13.64
	definitely not adequate	18	40.91	15	34.09
		chi = .27329		df = 1	
		p = .60113		(n=44)	
<b>b)</b> <b>In-service Training</b>	definitely adequate	1	5.26	2	10.53
	somewhat adequate	7	36.84	5	26.32
	not really adequate	3	15.79	1	5.26
	definitely not adequate	0	0	0	0
		chi = 1.2234		df = 2	
		p = .5424		(n=19)	
<b>c)</b> <b>Emotional Support</b>	adequate	10	22.22	9	20.00
	inadequate	8	17.78	4	8.89
	don't know	6	13.33	8	17.78
		chi = 1.4782		df = 2	
		p = .4775		(n=45)	
<b>d)</b> <b>Practical Advice</b>	adequate	13	28.89	12	26.67
	inadequate	9	20.00	7	15.56
	don't know	2	4.44	2	4.44
		chi = .0904		df = 2	
		p = .9551		(n=45)	
<b>e)</b> <b>Depersonalisation</b>	high	3	7.69	0	0
	moderate	6	15.38	0	0
	low	12	30.77	18	46.15
		chi = 10.028		df = 2	
		p = 0.0066 *		(n=39)	
<b>f)</b> <b>Emotional Exhaustion</b>	high	9	22.50	7	17.50
	moderate	9	22.50	7	17.50
	low	4	10.00	4	10.00
		chi = .1010		df = 2	
		p = .95075		(n=40)	
<b>g)</b> <b>Personal Accomplishment</b>	high	2	5.13	2	5.13
	moderate	12	30.77	5	12.82
	low	7	17.95	11	28.21
		chi = 3.5615		df = 2	
		p = .16851		(n=39)	



Table 6 a) shows that with reference to perceived adequacy of *initial teacher training*, all participants on whom there were data (n=44) rated it as either 'definitely not adequate' or 'not really adequate' in terms of preparing them for managing abused children. Whether teachers had harboured suspicions was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of initial teacher training, therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 1a.

Table 6 b) shows that forty-two per cent of the sample (n=19) had received some *in-service training* about child sexual abuse. Of these, 79 per cent (n=15) rated it as either 'somewhat adequate' or 'definitely adequate' in terms of preparing them for managing abused children. The remaining 21 per cent (n=4) rated it 'not really adequate'. Whether teachers had harboured suspicions was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of in-service training, therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 1b.

Table 6 c) shows that forty-two per cent of the sample (n=19) rated the provision of *emotional support* for teachers in relation to child sexual abuse as 'adequate', 27 per cent (n=12) rated it as 'inadequate', and the remaining 31 per cent (n=14) did not know. Whether teachers had harboured suspicions of abuse was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of the available emotional support for teachers, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 1c.

Table 6 d) shows that with reference to the perceived adequacy of the *practical advice* available for teachers in relation to child sexual abuse, 55 per cent of the sample (n=

25) thought it was 'adequate', 36 per cent (n=16) thought it was 'inadequate', and the remaining nine per cent (n=4) did not know. Whether teachers had harboured suspicions was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of available practical advice for teachers, therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 1d.

Table 6 e) shows that eight per cent of the sample (n=3) had scores reflecting high *depersonalisation*, 15 per cent (n=6) had scores reflecting moderate depersonalisation, and 77 per cent had scores reflecting low depersonalisation (n=30). Whether teachers had harboured suspicions of abuse *was* significantly related to the reported levels of depersonalisation ( $p=0.0066$ ): all of the participants who had not suspected abuse (n=18) reported low levels of depersonalisation, whereas all the participants who reported high levels of depersonalisation (n=3) had harboured suspicions of abuse. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in relation to hypothesis 1e.

Table 6 f) shows that forty per cent of the entire sample (n=16) had scores reflecting high levels of *emotional exhaustion*, 40 per cent (n=16) had scores reflecting moderate levels and the remaining 20 per cent (n=8) had scores reflecting low levels. Whether teachers had harboured suspicions was *not* significantly related to their reported levels of emotional exhaustion, therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 1f.

Table 6 g) shows that ten per cent of the entire sample (n=4) had scores reflecting high levels of *personal accomplishment*, 44 per cent (n=17) had scores reflecting moderate



levels and 46 per cent (n=18) had scores reflecting low levels. Whether teachers had harboured suspicions was *not* significantly related to reported levels of personal accomplishment, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 1g.

### 3.3.2. Hypothesis Two

Table 7: Chi square analyses for hypothesis two

HYPOTHESIS 2.		Have you received disclosures?			
		yes		no	
		number	%	number	%
a) Initial Teacher Training	definitely adequate	0	0	0	0
	somewhat adequate	0	0	0	0
	not really adequate	2	4.55	9	20.45
	definitely not adequate	7	15.91	26	59.09
		chi = .04656		df = 1	
b) In-service Training	definitely adequate	0	0	3	15.79
	somewhat adequate	4	21.05	8	42.11
	not really adequate	2	10.53	2	10.53
	definitely not adequate	0	0	0	0
		chi = 2.0299		df = 2	
c) Emotional Support	adequate	4	8.89	15	33.33
	inadequate	5	11.11	7	15.56
	don't know	0	0	14	31.11
		chi = 7.0339		df = 2	
d) Practical Advice	adequate	6	13.33	19	42.22
	inadequate	3	6.67	13	28.89
	don't know	0	0	4	8.89
		chi = 1.265		df = 2	
e) Depersonalisation	high	1	2.56	2	5.13
	moderate	3	7.69	3	7.69
	low	3	7.69	27	69.23
		chi = 5.954		df = 2	
f) Emotional Exhaustion	high	3	7.50	13	32.50
	moderate	4	10.00	12	30.00
	low	1	2.50	7	17.50
		chi = .54688		df = 2	
g) Personal Accomplishment	high	0	0	4	10.26
	moderate	5	12.82	12	30.77
	low	2	5.3	16	41.03
		chi = 2.9632		df = 2	

Table 7 a) & b) show that whether teachers had received disclosures was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of *initial teacher training* or *in-service training*. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 2a and 2b.

Table 7 c) shows that a relationship that approached significance was found between whether teachers received disclosures and the perceived adequacy of the available *emotional support* ( $p=0.029$ ): 55 per cent of participants who had received disclosures ( $n=5$ ) rated the provision of emotional support as 'inadequate', whereas 42 per cent of participants who had not received disclosures ( $n=15$ ) rated emotional support as 'adequate'. Therefore the null hypothesis could be partially rejected in relation to hypothesis 2c.

Table 7 d) shows that whether teachers had received disclosures was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of available *practical advice* for teachers, therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 2d.

Table 7 e) shows that the relationship between whether teachers received disclosures and their reported levels of *depersonalisation* approached significance ( $p=0.050$ ): 84 per cent of participants who had not received disclosures ( $n=27$ ) reported low levels of depersonalisation, whereas only 43 per cent of teachers who had received disclosures reported low levels of depersonalisation ( $n=3$ ). Therefore the null hypothesis could be partially rejected in relation to hypothesis 2e.



Table 7 f) & g) show that whether teachers had received disclosures, was *not* significantly related to their reported levels of *emotional exhaustion* or *personal accomplishment*. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 2f and 2g.

### 3.3.3. Hypothesis Three

Table 8: Chi square analysis for hypothesis three

HYPOTHESIS 3.		How well would you cope with suspicions?					
		well		not well		d/k	
		number	%	number	%	number	%
a) Initial Teacher Training	definitely adequate	0	0	0	0	0	0
	somewhat adequate	0	0	0	0	0	0
	not really adequate	11	25.00	0	0	0	0
	definitely not adequate	23	52.27	2	4.55	8	18.18
		Chi = 4.3137 df = 2 p = .11569 (n=44)					
b) In-service Training	definitely adequate	3	15.79	0	0	0	0
	somewhat adequate	10	52.63	0	0	2	10.53
	not really adequate	3	15.79	1	5.26	0	0
	definitely not adequate	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Chi = 5.0468 df = 4 p = .28252 (n=19)					
c) Emotional Support	adequate	15	33.33	1	2.22	3	6.67
	inadequate	10	22.22	1	2.22	1	2.22
	don't know	9	20.00	0	0	5	11.11
		Chi = 4.1332 df = 4 p = .3882 (n=45)					
d) Practical Advice	adequate	21	46.67	1	2.22	3	6.67
	inadequate	11	24.44	1	2.22	4	8.89
	don't know	2	4.44	0	0	2	4.44
		Chi = 3.7860 df = 4 p = .4357 (n=45)					
e) Depersonalisation	high	2	5.12	0	0	6	15.38
	moderate	5	12.83	1	2.56	0	0
	low	23	58.97	1	2.56	1	2.56
		Chi = 3.5161 df = 4 p = .4752 (n=39)					
f) Emotional Exhaustion	high	13	32.50	0	0	3	7.50
	moderate	13	32.50	1	2.50	2	5.00
	low	5	12.50	1	2.50	2	5.00
		Chi = 2.5403 df = 4 p = .63743 (n=40)					
g) Personal Accomplishment	high	2	5.13	1	2.56	1	2.56
	moderate	15	38.46	1	2.56	1	2.56
	low	13	33.33	0	0	5	12.82
		Chi = 7.19219 df = 4 p = .1260 (n=39)					

Table 8 shows that 75 per cent of participants (n=34) thought they would cope well with cases of suspected abuse, should they arise. Five per cent (n=2) thought they would not cope well, and 20 per cent (n=9) did not know how they would cope.

Table 8 a) & b) shows that whether teachers thought they could cope with cases of suspected abuse was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of *initial training* or the perceived adequacy of *in-service training* therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 3a & 3b.

Table 8 c) & d) shows that whether teachers thought they could cope with cases of suspected abuse was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of available *emotional support* or the perceived adequacy of available *practical advice* therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 3c & 3d.

Table 8 e), f) & g) shows that whether teachers thought they could cope with cases of suspected abuse was *not* significantly related to their reported levels of *depersonalisation*, *emotional exhaustion* or *personal accomplishment*. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 3e, 3f and 3g.



### 3.3.4. Hypothesis Four

**Table 9: Chi square analyses for hypothesis four**

HYPOTHESIS 4.		How well would you cope with disclosures?					
		well		not well		d/k	
		number	%	number	%	number	%
a) Initial Teacher Training	definitely adequate	0	0	0	0	0	0
	somewhat adequate	0	0	0	0	0	0
	not really adequate	11	25.00	0	0	0	0
	definitely not adequate	24	54.55	3	6.82	6	13.64
		Chi = 3.7714 df = 2 p = .15172 (n=44)					
b) In-service Training	definitely adequate	3	15.79	0	0	0	0
	somewhat adequate	9	47.37	0	0	3	15.79
	not really adequate	4	21.05	0	0	0	0
	definitely not adequate	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Chi = 2.0781 df = 2 p = .3537 (n=19)					
c) Emotional Support	adequate	16	35.56	2	4.44	1	2.22
	inadequate	10	22.22	0	0	2	4.44
	don't know	9	20.00	1	2.22	4	8.89
		Chi = 4.5338 df = 4 p = .3385 (n=45)					
d) Practical Advice	adequate	19	42.22	1	2.22	5	11.11
	inadequate	14	31.11	1	2.22	1	2.22
	don't know	2	4.44	1	2.22	1	2.22
		Chi = 4.3264 df = 4 p = .3636 (n=45)					
e) Depersonalisation	high	24	61.54	3	7.69	3	7.69
	moderate	4	10.26	0	0	2	5.13
	low	3	7.69	0	0	0	0
		Chi = 3.7237 df = 4 p = .4446 (n=39)					
f) Emotional Exhaustion	high	13	32.50	1	2.50	2	5.00
	moderate	12	30.00	1	2.50	3	7.50
	low	7	17.50	1	2.50	0	0
		Chi = 1.9427 df = 4 p = .7463 (n=40)					
g) Personal Accomplishment	high	3	7.69	1	2.56	0	0
	moderate	13	33.33	1	2.56	3	7.69
	low	15	38.46	1	2.56	2	5.13
		Chi = 2.6627 df = 4 p = .6157 (n=39)					

Table 9 shows that 78 per cent of participants (n=35) thought they would cope well with cases of disclosed abuse, should they arise, seven per cent (n=3) thought they would not cope well, and 15 per cent (n=7) did not know how they would cope.

Table 9 a) & b) shows that whether teachers thought they could cope with cases of disclosed abuse, was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of *initial training* or *in-service training*. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 4a and 4b.

Table 9 c) & d) show that whether teachers thought they could cope with cases of disclosed abuse was *not* significantly related to the perceived adequacy of available *emotional support* or *practical advice*, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 4c & 4d.

Table 9 e), f) & g) show that whether teachers thought they could cope with cases of disclosed abuse was *not* significantly related to their reported levels of *depersonalisation*, *emotional exhaustion* or *personal accomplishment*. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in relation to hypothesis 4e, 4f and 4g.



### 3.4. Additional Findings

As the reported levels of burn-out appeared quite inflated, a comparison was made with the norms available in the MBI Form Ed manual (Maslach & Jackson, 1993).

Table 10: A comparison of the average burn-out scores (and standard deviations) between the current study and the available teacher norms as reported in the MBI Form Ed manual

	Depersonalisation x (SD)	Emotional Exhaustion x (SD)	Personal Accomplishment x (SD)
Teacher Norms (Maslach & Jackson 93) (n=4,163)	11.00 (6.19)	21.25 (11.01)	33.54 (6.89)
Current Study (n=45)	5.00 (5.13)	26.47 (9.73)	35.56 (4.94)

Although Table 10 shows that primary school teachers in the current study had considerably lower average scores of depersonalisation, higher scores of emotional exhaustion and higher scores of personal accomplishment; all three scores are nonetheless within one standard deviation of the previously reported norms for teachers.



### 3.5. Qualitative Data

The first level of data *analysis* involved 'dimensionalising' the three categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This refers to the sub-division of each category into themes that reflect the dimensions of the construct under inquiry. For example, the first category relating to 'perceived coping with child sexual abuse' was 'dimensionalised' according to whether participants' comments referred to factors that *assisted* coping or factors that *hindered* coping. Two envelopes were prepared that were entitled 'factors that assist coping' and 'factors that hinder coping', and the comments were re-distributed accordingly. This same process was followed in relation to the categories of 'degree of emotional involvement in the distress of a child thought or known to have been abused' and 'stress associated with teaching a child thought or known to have been abused'. Table 11 shows the resulting categories, the number of comments in each and the proportion of comments in relation to the total.

Table 11: Categories resulting from the first level of analysis of qualitative data

	first level of 'dimensionalising' data	<i>no of comments</i>	<i>% of total</i>
1.	Factors that assist coping with child sexual abuse	12	26.7
2.	Factors that hinder coping with child sexual abuse	6	13.3
3.	Factors that protect against emotional involvement in the child's distress	2	4.4
4.	Factors that intensify emotional involvement in the child's distress	10	22.2
5.	Factors that protect against the amount of stress	6	13.3
6.	Factors that intensify the amount of stress	9	20

This level of categorisation was subjected to inter-rater agreement. An independent rater was asked to distribute the individual comments (that had been typed and cut into



segments) into one of the six titled envelopes that best described it. The resulting agreement rate was 96 per cent. Disagreement was resolved by discussion.

The second level of analysis involved searching the dimensionalised categories for common themes. This resulted in the identification of 15 themes, the titles of which are shown in Tables 12 to 14.

Table 12: Theme titles resulting from the second level of analysis of qualitative data in relation to the dimension of coping

Factors that assist coping (12 comments)	Factors that hinder coping (6 comments)
Identification of a supportive colleague (4)	Lack of identified supportive colleague (2)
Previous experience with abused children (3)	Disturbing nature of child sexual abuse (2)
Length of time employed in Education (2)	No previous experience with child sexual abuse (2)
Having received training (2)	
Having one's own children (1)	

Table 13: Theme titles resulting from the second level of analysis of qualitative data in relation to the dimension of emotional involvement

Factors that protected against emotional involvement (n=2)	Factors that intensified emotional involvement (n=10)
Lack of close relationship with child (1)	Close relationship with child (6)
Teacher's other demands (1)	Relative severity of the abuse (1)
	No previous experience with child sexual abuse (1)
	Protracted nature of teachers' involvement with child (1)
	Challenging behaviour of the child (1)

Table 14: Theme titles resulting from the second level of analysis of qualitative data in relation to the dimension of stress

Factors that protected against stress (n=6)	Factors that intensified stress (n=9)
Relative severity of abuse (2)	Presence of the child's family (3)
Multi-disciplinary involvement (2)	No previous experience with child sexual abuse (2)
Lack of close relationship with child (2)	Sense of responsibility for noticing signs of abuse(2)
	Sense of powerlessness (1)
	Close relationship with the child (1)

Examples of the themes are illustrated below with participants' own words.

*Factors that assisted coping with cases of suspected or disclosed abuse*

Table 12 shows that four comments referred to the *identification of a supportive colleague*. For example: *"I know that if I mentioned it to the Head it would be picked up and dealt with - I'd be backed-up"*. Three comments referred to being able to draw on *previous experience of dealing with abused children*. For example: *"Having gone through it several times, it becomes almost second nature, you go into automatic pilot in terms of following procedures"*. Two comments referred to the *length of time employed in education*. For example: *" I think I'd cope very well because I've been teaching since 1979, I don't find teaching difficult, nor the subject of sexual abuse...I'm not scared of asking questions"*. Two comments referred to *having received training*. For example: *"I've done a 2 day course with an expert I had extreme respect for. She tried to help us experience the feelings of the children. When you can understand their feelings you can help cope better yourself. She also gave us facts about who to contact, so now I'd know where to go for back-up"*. The



final one comment referred to *having one's own children* as assisting coping: *"It makes a difference if you've got children of your own, you feel more physically at ease....you need personal experience of children, not just teaching experience"*.

### ***Factors that hindered coping with cases of suspected or disclosed abuse***

Table 12 shows that two comments referred to the *lack of identified supportive colleague*. For example: *"The one criticism I have is that no-one has ever, ever, in the ten years since the first case I was involved in, talked to me about it. We were discussing a case on the course I went on and I just began to cry. There's no-one trained to talk to, so you just carry it around on your own. You can talk to your family but no-one has officially de-briefed me and there's a lot of baggage to carry"*.

Two comments referred to the *disturbing nature of child sexual abuse*. For example: *"It's an ugly aspect of life..you can get a very distorted picture of life..there's added stress from the 'sleaze factor', this is not the culture young teachers are used to. It's disturbing, has anyone else said that to you?"*. The remaining two comments referred to the difficulty of facing a case of child sexual abuse with *no previous experience*. For example: *"The first case is always...Oh my God!!!"*

### ***Factors that protected against emotional involvement in the distress of children thought or known to have been abused***

Table 13 shows that one comment referred to the *lack of a close relationship with the child*: *"I only felt a little involved ...because I'd only just had her in my class. I know it sounds callous, but I hadn't built up a relationship with her"*. The other comment

referred to a *teacher's other demands*: "You can't be [very involved] ..you need to stay rational and sensible and seek help...you've got other children too, you tend to be very busy keeping everyone chugging along".

***Factors that intensified emotional involvement in the distress of children thought or known to have been abused***

Table 13 shows that six comments referred to a *close relationship with the child*. For example: "I felt greatly involved because I liked the child...that makes all the difference". One comment referred to the *relative severity of the abuse*: "I felt a great deal involved because of the extent of the abuse and the length of time it had been going on...also she was abused by a family member". One comment referred to the involvement being intensified for newly qualified teachers with *no previous experience*: "I felt greatly involved because it was early on in my teaching career, it was all new to me". One comment referred to the *protracted nature of a teacher's involvement*: "The involvement doesn't go away and it's not something that you can put in a compartment, it's not finished". The final comment referred to the *child's challenging behaviour*: "You can't help feeling for them if you see it manifested in their behaviour..the things they say can make your hairs stand on end".

***Factors that protected against the stress of teaching children thought or known to have been abused***

Table 14 shows that two comments referred to the *relative severity of the abuse*. For example: "I didn't find it that stressful because it happened a long time ago". Two



comments referred to *multi-disciplinary involvement*. For example: *"..it was straight forward: I reported it to the Head and then to Social Services"*. The final two comments referred to the *lack of a close relationship with the child*. For example: *"I didn't find it at all stressful because she wasn't in my class..it felt less like my responsibility"*.

***Factors that intensified the stress of teaching children thought or known to have been abused***

Table 14 shows that three comments referred to the *presence of the family*. For example: *"I felt considerably stressed because of the threats made to her and to the school"*. Two comments referred to *no previous experience* with abused children. For example: *"I found it extremely stressful..it was my first one, it was horrific. It was the worst case I've ever come across..it was just awful. She was unable to say anything, for lots of reasons...she rarely hugged me and never kissed me whereas most of the kids in my class would"*. Two comments referred to a *sense of responsibility for noticing signs of abuse*. For example: *"I was aware of the progression in the child, through withdrawal and then such a change in behaviour..then I thought why didn't I notice, why didn't I do something earlier. I felt a little guilty, that's what I mean by finding the experience stressful; I took it upon my self to blame myself for not noticing the signs"*. One comment referred to a *sense of powerlessness*: *"The stress comes from not being able to get anything done"*. The final comment referred to a *close relationship with the child*: *"I found it extremely stressful because I'd had him in my class for two consecutive years"*.

### ***Any-Other-Comments***

'Any-other-comments' from stages I and II were combined and analysed according to emerging themes. Five core themes emerged which are shown in Table 15. This process was subject to inter-rater reliability with an agreement rate of 92 per cent. Disagreement was resolved by discussion.

Table 15: Type and frequency of 'any other comments' from stage I and II according to five main categories

<b>'Any Other Comments': Five Main Themes</b>	<b>No of comments from Stage I (Teacher Survey)</b>	<b>No of comments from Stage II (Individual Interview)</b>	<b>% of total</b>
<b>1. The challenge of teaching sexually abused children</b>	12	6	32.1
<b>2. Inadequacy of training and support in relation to child sexual abuse</b>	5	8	23.2
<b>3. Importance of training</b>	4	8	21.4
<b>4. Frustrations with Social Services</b>	1	7	14.2
<b>5. Effects of participation in current research</b>	0	5	8.9

Examples of the themes are illustrated below in the participants' own words.

#### ***The challenge of teaching children thought or known to have been abused***

For example: *"Just because a child is having problems at home doesn't mean they'll be pathetic in school, his behaviour was a nightmare. Other types of abuse were known about and had been mentioned (physical and emotional), but no-one mentioned sexual abuse. I knew there was more to it....he looked so scared! He came back four years later looking for me. He had a bottle of vodka, he was only 14 years old."*



### ***Inadequacies of existing training and support***

For example, with reference to training: *"There was one time when a dinner lady found a young girl in the toilet trying to get the boys to play with her...you think that if these cases are just the tip of the iceberg, then we must be missing so many more, but we don't get any training".* With reference to support: *"For those teachers involved [with abused children] there need to be opportunities for de-briefing. I know it's not necessarily top of the priority list when a child is being atrociously abused, but it really does take its toll. It's good but it's not good enough for people just to say 'are you all right?' because you always just say yes. It would be helpful to have someone outside the school to talk to".*

### ***The importance of training***

For example: *"I've always worked in 'nice middle class schools' with 'nice Christian values' where these things don't happen, ha ha !! We just didn't know to look for it. In 20 years of teaching, it was not until I went on the course that I listened and became more aware...we are becoming a bit more aware here, we're keeping evidence just in case we're right about our suspicions...It has also helped to hear about a case conference concerning a child sexual abuse case where a child actually died. When you think how many people dealt with that family and no-one picked up the signs".*

### ***Frustrations with Social Services***

For example: *"We know a boy who's been sexually abused but school is not involved and the class teacher can see him falling apart. For some reason we're not being told*

*about it - it's very disconcerting. One the other hand when action is being taken, it takes an infinity. One child's case conference was in February, the next one clashed with the social worker's holiday so it was put off for six months. That's a long time; 1/12 of a child's development. The social worker's involvement has never been specified, there's no attempt at liaison..it's very disconcerting. There's a hell of a lot of confusion and nothing actually seems to get done".*

### ***The effects of participation in the current research***

*For example: "It [the research] is useful in so far as it has got us thinking about the effects of child sexual abuse [on us]. It has generated discussion among the teachers. After the Educational Psychologist's visits, there's a noticeable relaxation of tension in the child. He just talks to them. It's like that with the teachers - as if permission has been given to bring it all out into the open".*



## **4. DISCUSSION**

### ***4.1. The identification of Child Sexual Abuse in Schools***

The current study revealed that, on average, participants harboured 1.5 suspicions and received 0.4 disclosures, across an average teaching career of 16 years.

Obtaining statistics that accurately reflect the scope of child sexual abuse is notoriously difficult (Glaser & Frosh, 1993). Results from the current study cannot be used to project prevalence estimates of child sexual abuse as there is no way of determining what proportion of teachers' suspicions were unfounded and what proportion actually reflected abuse. The current results cannot be compared with those of existing prevalence surveys, for several reasons. First, prevalence surveys rely on retrospective adult recall of childhood experiences which represents a very different method from the current study which relied on the subjective reports of an independent observer. Second, the current study, for practical reasons, did not impose a definition of child sexual abuse; inevitably this complicates any attempt at comparing results across studies.

Houlihan (1990) reports that teachers are among the adults most frequently disclosed to, and several authors have suggested that teachers' unique position in the community makes them well placed to detect abuse (Mahler, 1987, Webster, 1991). However, in order to discover whether teachers identify proportionally more child sexual abuse than other professionals depends on first being able to calculate the total number of children that teachers are exposed to in a given time period. Deriving such a figure from the current study was complicated by the following factors. First, while the average

teacher has a class of 30 per year, they also have some contact with the rest of the children in the school. Second, the presence of head teachers in the current sample compounds the problem as they will not have equivalent exposure rates as class teachers.

A further difficulty that prevents any attempts at estimating prevalence from the current study relates to the low overall response rate. It is possible that those teachers who did respond were a self-selected sample representing those teachers with a heightened awareness or interest in the topic of child sexual abuse. This was certainly evident in the pattern of selection for stage II: all participants who consented to individual interviews had had some previous experience of working with abused children. The number of cases of suspected or disclosed abuse identified by the current sample may, therefore, be higher than the number of cases that their non-responding colleagues would identify.

With these caveats in mind some features of the cases of suspected and disclosed abuse are now discussed.

Fifty per cent of the suspicions in the current study related to girls ( $n=35$ ) and 40 per cent to boys ( $n=28$ ). These findings reflect less discrepancy between girls and boys than the usual 3:1 ratio reported by prevalence studies (Finkelhor, 1994). Seventy-six per cent of disclosures were from girls ( $n=13$ ) and 24 per cent from boys ( $n=4$ ), a ratio of approximately three girls to every boy. This is quite consistent with estimates of prevalence of abuse in the literature (Finkelhor, 1994), but differs from the finding that



teachers' suspicions of abuse were more evenly balanced between boys and girls. This may indicate that boys of primary school age are also subject to the same inhibitions to disclosure that older boys are known to be (Faller, 1989).

In 35 per cent of disclosed cases (n=6), no subsequent action was taken due to the children having retracted their disclosures. This represents a higher rate of retraction than found in previous research; for example, Sorenson & Snow (1991) reported that 92 per cent of those children who retracted later re-affirmed their original disclosure. No information was available in the current study about re-affirmation, but as no subsequent action was taken with those children who retracted, it suggests re-affirmations were either not made by the children involved, or made but not understood by the adults. However, while the proportion of retractions is much larger than expected, the actual numbers are still small.

#### ***4.2. Factors that Influence the Identification of Child Sexual Abuse***

No significant relationship was found between the perceived adequacy of training in relation to child sexual abuse, and whether teachers identified cases of abuse. Without evidence to support the hypothesis that training affects the identification of abuse, it could be argued that whether teachers harbour suspicions or receive disclosures is an entirely random process. Alternatively, the lack of a significant relationship may suggest that there are other important variables that have not been investigated that may affect the identification of child sexual abuse. For example, Braun (1988) proposes that teachers identify abuse intuitively. This was also reflected in the comments offered by some teachers in the current study. For example:

*"...It's bad enough being faced with bruises on a child, but with sexual abuse you're not actually faced with anything. It's just an intuition to begin with, it becomes more finely tuned over the years".*

How intuitive individual teachers are may be related to heightened awareness of the issues of child sexual abuse resulting from other sources such as media exposure, or contact with friends who were abused in their childhoods. However, the hypothesised importance of training is supported by the descriptive and qualitative data. That participants considered training to be relevant and important was supported by the finding that 95.5 per cent reported that they would welcome more initial training (n=43), and 90 per cent reported that they would take up opportunities for in-service training if it was offered (n=40). Twenty-one per cent of 'any-other-comments' referred to the importance of training, several comments highlighted the relationship between training and recognition of abuse. For example:

*"we're hoping if our INSET budget allows we'll be able to book the expert to talk to us all..we all feel we have no knowledge, not that it doesn't happen, but we don't know how to recognise the signs",*

*"It's important that schools have INSET about child sexual abuse because a lot of teachers won't have had experience of this and won't know what to look for."*

However, if the current sample represent teachers who have an interest in, or heightened awareness of, the topic of child sexual abuse, then their responses are likely to be biased and not necessarily representative of their colleagues. Finally, the absence of significant results may be attributable to type two errors, that is significant



relationships may exist but may not have been detected. Type two errors can result from insensitive measures or small samples sizes. In the current study, relevant initial teacher training was not considered adequate by any of the participants. This rendered impossible any investigation of a relationship between high perceptions of adequacy and whether teachers identified abuse. Similarly, only 19 teachers had received any in-service training in relation to child sexual abuse which considerably reduced the numbers subject to analysis.

A relationship that approached significance was found between the identification of child sexual abuse and the perceived adequacy of training: those teachers who had received disclosures were more likely to rate the availability of emotional support as 'inadequate' than those who had not received disclosures. This relationship probably reflects the likelihood that those teachers who received disclosures were confronted with the lack of resources which, consequently, clouded their perception of the general adequacy of support provision. That teachers considered support to be important was evident from the descriptive and qualitative data: 100 per cent of the sample (n=45) thought that it was 'extremely' or 'somewhat' important to have opportunities to talk about feelings in relation to cases of suspected or disclosed abuse. Similarly, 98 per cent of the sample (n=44) thought it was 'extremely' or 'somewhat' important to have opportunities to seek practical advice in relation to child sexual abuse.

A significant relationship was found between the reported levels of depersonalisation, and whether teachers harboured suspicions of abuse: the majority of teachers who reported low levels of depersonalisation had not harboured suspicions. A similar

pattern, that approached significance, was found in relation to disclosures: the majority of teachers who reported low levels of depersonalisation had not received disclosures. However, this finding cannot be interpreted as evidence that the identification of abuse *causes* teachers to develop depersonalised attitudes towards their pupils; such an interpretation would be inconsistent with the opinions expressed by teachers. Teachers' comments about cases of suspected or disclosed abuse were not "negative and cynical" (Maslach & Jackson, 1983), rather their comments suggested high degrees of sensitivity and concern for the children. For example:

*"how do you prove an adult is torturing a child? This is very common and heartbreaking to watch."*

*"[We need] advice on how to integrate abused children among their peer groups and how to create a stable and supportive emotional / educational environment for these children/their special needs."*

*"We've had 'circle-time' with the children but you can't ask leading questions. We've talked about CHILDLINE - the number's on the wall, and I've tried to create an environment where they can be open. We used to have a 'concerns box' where they could post their worries. It was anonymous but they are older now and would probably wonder where the information was going."*

While there is evidence that occupational stressors, such as large case loads cause a progression to burn-out (Maslach & Pines, 1977), it is only possible to make such causal assumptions from data that has been collected from longitudinal studies. It is not possible to determine from the current data whether teachers with high



depersonalisation scores would have reported equally high scores before their exposure to cases of suspected or disclosed abuse.

With reference to the other components of burn-out, the average levels of reported emotional exhaustion in the current sample were high, and reported personal accomplishment was low. That is, teachers' scores were suggestive of individuals who were emotionally depleted by their work and dissatisfied with their achievements. The high levels of burn-out reported by teachers in the current study are consistent with the literature from the UK and the US which has found that teachers report high levels of occupational stress (Cox et al, 1978, Maslach & Jackson, 1993).

#### ***4.3. Factors that Influence the Degree of Emotional Involvement and the Stress for Teachers Working with Abused Children***

It was evident from the current study that cases of suspected and disclosed abuse varied enormously in terms of how emotionally involving and stressful they were for teachers. The three most frequently recurring themes from the qualitative data were: first, that a close relationship with the child intensified the emotional impact on the teacher. Second, that the relative severity of the abuse determined the emotional impact on teachers; third, that facing a case of suspected or disclosed abuse for the first time intensified the emotional impact on teachers. Individual factors were not explored in this study but it is recognised that there will be other variables that interact to make dealing with an abused child a more or less stressful experience. For example, the presence of a supportive partner, friend or relative is likely to mediate against the

stress, whereas stressful life events outside work are likely to exacerbate the emotional impact.

Some authors have identified the denial (Peake, 1992) that dealing with sexual abuse can engender. The current sample, by virtue of their participation in a study about child sexual abuse, were unlikely to deny the reality of the phenomena, nor to deny the emotional impact of such work. They did, however, make references to attitudes that existed in their schools. For example:

*"it's not something that happens here, it's something that happens somewhere else! - that's been the attitude but the course has been a real eye opener for me."*

*"I remember being discouraged from doing anything about [my suspicions] in case I opened a huge can of worms."*

Sixteen per cent of the reasons given by head teachers for non participation in the current research (n=10) related to their belief that there were currently no abused children in their schools. For example:

*" To date we have had only one suspected case of abuse (I have been in post here for 15 years)."*

*"No children at the school have been abused".*

Whether such beliefs reflect denial or the reality of the situation is impossible to tell.



Bledin & Hunt (1993) warn of the anger that can permeate personal lives. Teachers from the current study made several references to the anger that working with abused children aroused in them. However, their anger was not directed at the child or the abuser but at Social Services. For example:

*"I was very cross when they decided to take her off the 'at-risk' register. I didn't think she should be taken off. I feel I have been important to her and I should have been listened to."*

*"I had five disclosures in 1989. I was angry with social services because they said that the abuse was 'mild' or something like that. How can abuse be mild?"*

*"Case conferences are the most bizarre experiences. This case involved a brother and a sister, the girl was in my class....at the end of the meeting, when it was to be decided if the girl was going on the child protection register, the social worker said that only the boy would be registered. People were murderous, we couldn't believe our ears. The social worker stuck to his decision. He seemed to be in denial about the effect on the girl. Well, I lost my cool..."*

As well as illustrating the intensity of feeling that working with abused children can arouse, these comments illustrate the difficulties of inter-agency working when the different agencies have different remits and priorities. The teachers in the current study made several comments referring to the need for training to address inter-agency liaison. For example:

*"a lot has changed with the Children Act. Perhaps not every teacher, but at least one teacher in each school needs more training which they could then feedback to the others. People need to know who is involved, what the procedures are etc."*

Others thought: *"it's essential that all new teachers are briefed on the law."*

The lack of professional confidence that working with abused children can inspire (Furniss, 1991) seems to manifest in anxieties about reporting suspicions (Abrahams et al, 1992). The dilemma of whether to report or not was illustrated by one head teacher:

*"...whilst teachers do not want to falsely suspect, neither do they want to miss/not read the signs of abuse. If a child actually talks about an experience then for me it would be quite straight forward that the child's verbalisation must be investigated. However, as we know, many children say nothing, signs are not very tangible or conclusive.. no teacher could formalise their suspicions without taking the matter very seriously and I think that the biggest problem by far is 'what if I'm not right'. The damage that could be caused by a false suspicion being investigated is potentially terrible for the child and family as well as the teachers, school etc."*

Furniss (1991) commented on how the secrecy and helplessness experienced by abused children can be mirrored by the professionals who work with them. This dynamic also seemed to be reflected in some of the teacher's responses. For example:

*"It wasn't just me who was powerless, all the people who should have known better what to do were powerless too. I was surprised by that."*

*"As a teacher you are so involved and yet so powerless."*

#### ***4.4. Factors that Influence Teachers' Perceived Coping with Child Sexual Abuse***

Seventy-five per cent of teachers rated themselves as likely to cope well with suspicions (n=34), and 78 per cent rated themselves as likely to cope well with disclosures (n=35), should they arise. This is a surprising finding given that all of the



sample rated their initial training as 'inadequate' and only 42 per cent of the sample had received any in-service training. Moreover, 27 per cent of the sample thought that the provision of emotional support was inadequate and 36 per cent thought that the provision of practical advice was inadequate.

No significant relationship was found between the perceived adequacy of training and support and whether teachers felt they could cope with cases of abuse. These results are inconsistent with previous research that indicates that support at work, and in particular the perceived adequacy of the support (Maslach & Jackson, 1992, Lazarus, 1993), buffers against stress and enhances coping. These results are also inconsistent with the fact that the entire sample (n=45) rated it as important to have opportunities to receive emotional support at work and 98 per cent rated it as important to be able to seek practical advice. The elements of support that have been commonly identified as assisting coping are: access to information, feedback and opportunities to enhance self-esteem (Cohen & Wills, 1995). Teachers' comments suggested that these were also among the factors that they associated with coping well. For example:

*"There has always been someone I could call on who has been supportive and helpful in terms of procedures".*

Maslach & Jackson (1982) found that professionals tended to report low levels of burn-out when they had access to supportive colleagues and access to advice. However, in the current study, no significant relationship was found between the perceived ability to cope with cases of abuse and reported levels of burn-out. It is possible that the variables that affect a teacher's perception of coping were not those

variables subject to investigation in the current study. For example, variables such as social support outside of the work setting may have significant effects. Several comments from the interviews suggested that teachers associate relative coping with the length of their teaching career. However, when this relationship was subject to statistical analysis during the preliminary analysis, no significant association was found. It is likely that a number of methodological factors contributed to the lack of significant results.

Teachers' responses to the questionnaire item on perceived ability to cope were originally categorised as follows: '*very well*', '*reasonably well*', '*not well at all*' and '*I don't know*'. For the purpose of analysis the first two categories were collapsed to give a general category of '*well*'. However, in doing so, information on *relative* coping was lost and the remaining information only indicated *whether or not* teachers thought they would cope. It is possible that inhibitions about rating oneself as not coping well led to a biased response. Indeed, only two participants rated themselves as not coping well with cases of suspected abuse and only three participants rated themselves as not coping well with cases of disclosed abuse. The resulting small numbers do not allow powerful analyses with the other variables under investigation.

Taylor (1994) proposes that teachers are reluctant to acknowledge difficulties and find it hard to ask for help because of society's projections of them as "wise, just, capable, competent and knowledgeable". Another difficulty arises from asking participants about their *perceived* ability to cope with hypothetical situations which some teachers will have had *actual* experience of. It could be argued that those participants who had



not confronted cases of abuse, would overestimate their perceived ability to cope since they may be less aware of the emotional impact that such work has. Twenty per cent of the sample reported that they did not know how they would cope with suspicions and 15 per cent reported that they did not know how they would cope with disclosures; perhaps these are the most reliable judgements.

#### ***4.5. Summary of Results and Conceptual Framework***

There have been suggestions that primary school teachers' "unique position" makes them well placed to identify abuse (Maher, 1987). Data from the current study suggest that, on the occasions that teachers do confront cases of suspected or disclosed abuse, their "unique position" may not offer them much protection against the emotional impact that such cases can have.

First, no other professional group has both daily and extended contact with children in the way that teachers do. Moreover, the teacher may know the child's siblings and will certainly have some contact with parents and carers. Given these conditions, there is the potential for teachers and pupils to develop strong and affectionate bonds. In the context of such a relationship, the identification of abuse is likely to be particularly upsetting.

Second, most professionals who deal with sexually abused children have a specified remit in terms of, for example, assessment, investigation or treatment. Not only are their roles relatively defined, but their contact with the child is often time-limited. However, for a teacher, contact with an abused child can extend over several years.

While it could be argued that extended contact provides some rewarding opportunities for the teacher who can observe the child from detection through to protection, it is more likely that the stages of detection, reporting and investigation will be complicated and stressful for the teacher as she will be in the front line of the child's distress.

The third factor that differentiates teachers from other professionals who work with abused children relates to the regularity with which they confront abuse. Paradoxically, the relative infrequency with which teachers are exposed to abused children, may give them little opportunity to 'de-sensitise' themselves to the alarming nature of the work. A related point is that professional groups such as the police, social workers and mental health workers, will *expect* to have some exposure to child abuse. Teachers, however, may not. Expectation may be a variable that influences the perceived ability to cope with such work and the emotional toll it takes. The final difference between teachers and other professionals who deal with abused children is that the latter receive training and support.

#### ***4.6. Limitations of Current Method and Implications for Future Research***

The small sample size of the current sample may reflect the fact that individual teachers were reached only after the permission of two gate-keepers: LEAs and head teachers. Although all LEAs approved the research, only five per cent of the head teachers who were written to agreed to participate (n=9). Fifty-four per cent (n=95) of the head teachers failed to return reply slips indicating reasons for non-participation. In these cases, it is not therefore known if the individual primary school teachers were invited to participate or not. Another reason for the small response rate clearly reflected the



fact that the timing of the research coincided with other larger demands that were being made on the schools in question. For example, 32 per cent of all reasons given for non-participation referred to the preparation for, or recovery from, OFSTED inspections. It can be speculated that a proportion of those heads who did not reply, chose not to participate for the same reason.

The response rate may have improved had alternative procedures been offered. For example, questionnaires could have been completed over the 'phone or, with head teachers' permission, the author could have deposited boxes of questionnaires in staff rooms.

A criticism of many cross-sectional studies is that constructs such as coping and burn-out are processes which change over time and are, therefore, not well suited to methods that make an assessment at only one point in time. Any investigation of causal relationships requires a research design that collects data on, at least, two different points in time. A further limitation in the current study is that results cannot be generalised due to the highly selective and non-representative sample.

Although there is no one correct method for analysing qualitative material (Smith, 1995), the method adopted here departed from some qualitative methods in that the structure of interviews and analysis of material was not entirely free of *a priori* assumptions. Although the questions during the interview were asked in a non-directive way, it is recognised that participants may have had assumptions about what the author wanted to hear and edited their accounts accordingly. Moreover, the fact

that the author had posed particular hypothesis for the purpose of stage I may have influenced the assumptions that the author brought to the analysis of the qualitative data.

Given that the topic investigated in the current study is one without an empirical knowledge base, and, given that many of the constructs under inquiry were highly subjective (e.g. perceived ability to cope, emotional involvement and stress), it may perhaps have been more appropriate to have conducted an entirely qualitative study. This would have enabled themes relevant to teachers to be drawn out, which could then be subjected to a more rigorous and longitudinal quantitative investigation at a later stage.

#### ***4.7. Implications for Clinical Psychology***

Some researchers have proposed that teachers may find their work stressful because of their pre-existing depressive symptoms (Schonfeld, 1993). Others argue that symptoms of burn-out are work specific (Bowden, 1994). The latter argument, which is adopted here, indicates that interventions, such as training and support, need to be directed at organisations, rather than interventions, such as counselling, being directed at individuals.

The following section discusses the potential contribution of clinical psychology in relation to the psychological well-being of teachers who work with abused children. Implicit is the assumption that, if organisational systems fail to support professionals, the effective management of abused children may be compromised.



Educational psychologists have been in the forefront of developments in educational child abuse prevention programmes targeted at youngsters (Elliot, 1985) and have also developed guidelines for primary school teachers to help monitor suspicions of abuse in schools (Peake, 1989). There are also a few 'drop-in' initiatives run by clinical psychologists to support and advise teachers generally (Dowling & Osborne, 1994). However, there is no documented resource for the particular induction or support for teachers in relation to child sexual abuse, although the potential benefits of such a service have been highlighted (Lindsey, 1994).

There are several reasons why educational psychologists may not be the professionals best placed to provide such resources even if they were developed (Osborne, 1994). The school educational psychologist is part of the school system and is liable to make alliances when liaising between children, families and staff. A clinical psychologist, however, would not be embroiled in the school system and would represent a more neutral position from which they could intervene.

Clinical psychologists have been employed by the Police Force and by Social Services departments where their 'meta' position has made them well suited to offer training and 'consultations' to professionals in relation to child sexual abuse (Fielding, 1992; Peake, 1992). It has been suggested that because psychologists are not involved in the statutory investigation of child abuse, or in the chairing of case conferences, they are well placed to offer support and advice that is acceptable to other professionals (Peake, 1992).

Consultation is a particular service increasingly offered by clinical psychologists. It is different from training and support and has been defined as follows:

*A process involving a consultant who is invited to help a consultee with a work-related issue. The consultee can be an individual, group or organisation which enters into a negotiated contract with the consultant agreeing the boundaries of time, place and focus of consultancy work.. The responsibility for fulfilling the task lies with the consultee, whereas the responsibility for deepening the understanding of the processes lies with the consultant.*

(Ovretveit, Brunning & Huffington, 1992, p27).

The benefits of consultation in relation to child sexual abuse seem clear. Consultation would draw both on psychology's large knowledge base about the dynamics, assessment, intervention and outcome of child sexual abuse, and on clinical psychologists' experience and skills in facilitating change in individuals, families and wider systems. That such an approach is effective and acceptable to the consultee has been supported by the audit of the Child Sexual Abuse Consultation Service (Peake, 1992). Set up and run by clinical psychologists, this provided a valuable resource for all professionals but especially for teachers as evidenced by their regular uptake of the service.



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## **APPENDICES**

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## QUESTIONNAIRE 1.

### A Survey of teachers' experiences of working with children who may have been sexually abused

#### RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Age..... Sex..... Marriage/Couple Status..... Number of Children.....

Ethnicity: White [ ] Black Caribbean [ ] Black African [ ] Black other [ ] Indian [ ]  
Pakistani [ ] Bangladeshi [ ] Chinese [ ] Asian [ ] Other [ ]

What was your teaching qualification?.....

How long have you been employed in education?.....

How many pupils are in the class that you currently teach? Less than 10 [ ] Between 10 & 20 [ ]  
Between 20 & 30 [ ] More than 30 [ ]

#### SECTION 1:TEACHER TRAINING

##### *Pre-Qualification*

**1a** During your teacher training, how many hours were spent addressing issues of child sexual abuse?

i) None [ ] ii) Between 1&2 [ ] iii) More than 3 [ ] (please state how many.....)

**1b** Do you think this has adequately prepared you for dealing with issues of abuse if they arise in relation to your pupils?

i) Yes definitely [ ] ii) Yes somewhat [ ] iii) Not really [ ] iv) Definitely not [ ]

**1c** Would you welcome opportunities to address these issues in more depth during teacher training?

i) Yes definitely [ ] ii) Yes probably [ ] iii) Not really [ ] iv) Definitely not [ ]



## Post-Qualification

**1d** Have you ever been offered opportunities for in-service training about child sexual abuse issues?

i) yes ☐ (how many hours did this involve.....)

ii) No ☐

**1e** If 'yes', do you think this has adequately prepared you for dealing with issues of sexual abuse should they arise in relation to your pupils?

i) Definitely not ☐

ii) Not really ☐

iii) Yes somewhat ☐

iv) Yes definitely ☐

**1f** Would you take up opportunities for in-service training if they were available?

i) Definitely not ☐

ii) Probably not ☐

iii) Yes probably ☐

iv) Yes definitely ☐

### SECTION 2: COPING WITH SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

**2** Generally, how well do you feel you would cope with cases of suspected sexual abuse should they arise in your classroom?

i) very well ☐

ii) reasonably well ☐

iii) not well at all ☐

iv) I don't know ☐

### SECTION 3: NUMBER AND NATURE OF SUSPICIONS

**3a** Over the course of your teaching career, have any of your colleagues had suspicions that a pupil may have been the victim of child sexual abuse?

i) No, not that I am aware of ☐

ii) yes ☐ (please state how many colleagues have had suspicions.....)

**3b** Over the course of your teaching career, how many of your pupils have **you** suspected may have been victims of child sexual abuse?

i) None ☐

ii) One ☐

iii) If more than one, please state how many.....



If you answered 'none' to question.3b, please go straight to question no 4, otherwise please complete the table below . If you are answering the questions with reference to more than one child, please complete the corresponding number of columns (i.e the first column will record answers in relation to child one, the second will record answers in relation to child two and so-on). If you have had suspicions about more than 8 children, please continue on the extra sheet (page 8) provided at the back of this questionnaire.

	child 1	child 2	child 3	child 4	child 5	child 6	child 7	child 8
<b>3c sex of child</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) male	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) female	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3d Who did you first share this information with?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) The child's family	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) No-one	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Social Services	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) A colleague	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) The Headteacher	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) A friend	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) A relative	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
viii) My partner	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ix) Other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3e Which, if any, of the following concerns did you have about officially reporting your suspicions?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Fear of parental retaliation	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) Fear of lack of support from colleagues	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Fear of possible court involvement	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Fear of becoming emotionally involved	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) Fear that your suspicions were unfounded	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) Fear of adverse consequences for the child	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3f Did you officially report your suspicions (within the school)?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Did your suspicions remain?</b>								
iii) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Was any subsequent action taken?</b>								
v) yes (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....



<b>3g</b> How involved did you feel with the emotional distress of your pupil?	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) A fair bit	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) A great deal	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3h</b> Looking back, how stressful did you find this experience?	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Considerably stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Extremely stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

#### SECTION 4: COPING WITH DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

**4** Generally, how well do you feel you would cope with cases of disclosed sexual abuse should they arise in your classroom?

- i) I don't know [ ]      ii) Not well at all [ ]      iii) Reasonably well [ ]      iv) Very well [ ]

#### SECTION 5: NUMBER AND NATURE OF DISCLOSURES

**5a** Over the course of your teaching career, have any of your colleagues received disclosures of sexual abuse from pupils?

- i) No, not that I am aware of [ ]      ii) yes [ ] (please state how many colleagues.....)

**5b** Over the course of your teaching career, how many of your pupils have disclosed sexual abuse to *you*?

- i) None [ ]      ii) One [ ]      iii) If more than one, please state how many.....



If you answered 'none' to 5b, please go straight to question no 6, otherwise please complete the table below. If you are answering the questions with reference to more than one child, please complete the corresponding number of columns (i.e the first column will record answers in relation to child one, the second will record answers in relation to child two and so-on). If you have received disclosures from more than 8 children, please continue on the extra sheet provided (page 9) at the back of this questionnaire.

	child 1	child 2	child 3	child 4	child 5	child 6	child 7	child 8
<b>5c sex of child</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) male	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) female	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5d Who did you first share this information with?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) The child's family	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) No-one	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Social Services	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) A colleague	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) The Headteacher	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) A friend	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) A relative	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
viii) My partner	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ix) Other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5e Which, if any, of the following concerns did you have about officially reporting the child's disclosure?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Fear of parental retaliation	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) Fear of lack of support from colleagues	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Fear of possible court involvement	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Fear of becoming emotionally involved	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) Fear that child's allegation was untrue	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) Fear of adverse consequences for the child	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5f Did you officially report the disclosure (within the school)?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Did the child retract their disclosure?</b>								
iii) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Was any subsequent action taken?</b>								
v) yes (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....



<b>5g How involved did you feel with the emotional distress of your pupil?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) A fair bit	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) A great deal	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5h Looking back, how stressful did you find this experience?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Considerably stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Extremely stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

## SECTION 6: SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

### *Emotional Support*

**6a** How important do you think it is to have the opportunity to talk about your feelings in relation to suspicions or disclosures of sexual abuse should they arise?

- i) Extremely important [ ]      ii) Somewhat important [ ]      iii) Not really important [ ]      iv) Definitely not important [ ]

**6b** What sorts of opportunities for *emotional support* for teachers exist in your school?

- i) There are formal support systems available [ ]  
 ii) There are informal support systems available (i.e: talking to colleagues) [ ]  
 iii) There are neither of the above [ ]  
 iv) I don't know. [ ]  
 v) Other (please specify) [ ]

**6c** Generally, how adequate do you consider the provision of *emotional support* for teachers in relation to child sexual abuse to be?

- i) Entirely adequate [ ]      ii) Somewhat adequate [ ]      iii) Totally inadequate [ ]      iv) I don't know [ ]



## Practical Advice

**6d** How important do you think it is to have the opportunity to seek *advice* about practical issues in relation to suspicions or disclosures of sexual abuse should they arise (eg, information about referral procedure, possible court involvement, roles of other professionals)?

- i) Definitely not important [ ]      ii) Not really important [ ]      iii) Somewhat important [ ]      iv) Extremely important [ ]

**6e** What sorts of opportunities for seeking *advice* exist in your school?

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| i) There are formal advice-seeking opportunities                                 | [ ] |
| ii) There are informal advice-seeking opportunities (i.e: talking to colleagues) | [ ] |
| iii) There are written policy guidelines for reference                           | [ ] |
| iv) There are none of the above  | [ ] |
| v) Other (please specify )   | [ ] |
| vi) I don't know   | [ ] |

**6f** Generally, how adequate do you consider the provision of *advice* for teachers in relation to child sexual abuse to be?

- i) I don't know [ ]      ii) Totally inadequate [ ]      iii) Somewhat adequate [ ]      iv) Entirely adequate [ ]

Please feel free to add any other comments in relation to the issues raised in this questionnaire.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**THANKYOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**



## NUMBER AND NATURE OF SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

(Continued from question 3. Only complete this page if you have had suspicions of abuse about **more** than 8 children)

	<i>child 9</i>	<i>child 10</i>	<i>child 11</i>	<i>child 12</i>	<i>child 13</i>	<i>child 14</i>	<i>child 15</i>	<i>child 16</i>
<b>3c sex of child</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) male	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) female	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3d Who did you first share this information with?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) The child's family	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) No-one	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Social Services	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) A colleague	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) The Headteacher	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) A friend	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) A relative	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
viii) your partner	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ix) Other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3e Which, if any, of the following concerns did you have about officially reporting your suspicions?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Fear of parental retaliation	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) Fear of lack of support from colleagues	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Fear of possible court involvement	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Fear of becoming emotionally involved	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) Fear that your suspicions were unfounded	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) Fear of adverse consequences for the child	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3f Did you officially report your suspicions (within the school)?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Did your suspicions remain?</b>								
iii) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Was any subsequent action taken?</b>								
v) yes (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....



<b>3g</b> How involved did you feel with the emotional distress of your pupil?	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) A fair bit	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) A great deal	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>3h</b> Looking back, how stressful did you find this experience?	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Considerably stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Extremely stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

## NUMBER AND NATURE OF DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

(Continued from question 5. Only complete this page if you have received disclosures from more than 8 children)

	<i>child 9</i>	<i>child 10</i>	<i>child 11</i>	<i>child 12</i>	<i>child 13</i>	<i>child 14</i>	<i>child 15</i>	<i>child 16</i>
<b>5c</b> sex of child	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) male	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) female	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5d</b> Who did you first share this information with?	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) The child's family	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) No-one	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Social Services	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) A colleague	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) The Headteacher	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) A friend	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) A relative	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
viii) your partner	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ix) Other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....



<b>5e Which, if any, of the following concerns did you have about officially reporting the child's disclosure?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Fear of parental retaliation	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) Fear of lack of support from colleagues	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Fear of possible court involvement	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Fear of becoming emotionally involved	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) Fear that child's allegation was untrue	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) Fear of adverse consequences for the child	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vii) other (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5f Did you officially report the disclosure (within the school)?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Did the child retract their disclosure?</b>								
iii) yes	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>Was any subsequent action taken?</b>								
v) yes (please specify.....)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
vi) no	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5g How involved did you feel with the emotional distress of your pupil?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) A fair bit	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
v) A great deal	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>5h Looking back, how stressful did you find this experience?</b>	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick	please tick
i) Not at all stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
ii) A little stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iii) Considerably stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
iv) Extremely stressful	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....



Dear teacher,

Thank-you for kindly agreeing to help me run a pilot study of the enclosed questionnaires. These are in preparation for a doctoral dissertation investigating the impact on primary school teachers of working with abused children. At this stage, I am also interested in finding out how "user-friendly" the questionnaires are, and would value your feedback on the following areas:

1 How long did it take you to read and complete the questionnaires?  
.....

2 Do you think this was too long?.....

3 Were the questions self-explanatory?.....

4 Was the language understandable?.....

5 Was the topic of interest to you?.....

6 How did you feel about answering questions about the abuse of children?.....  
.....

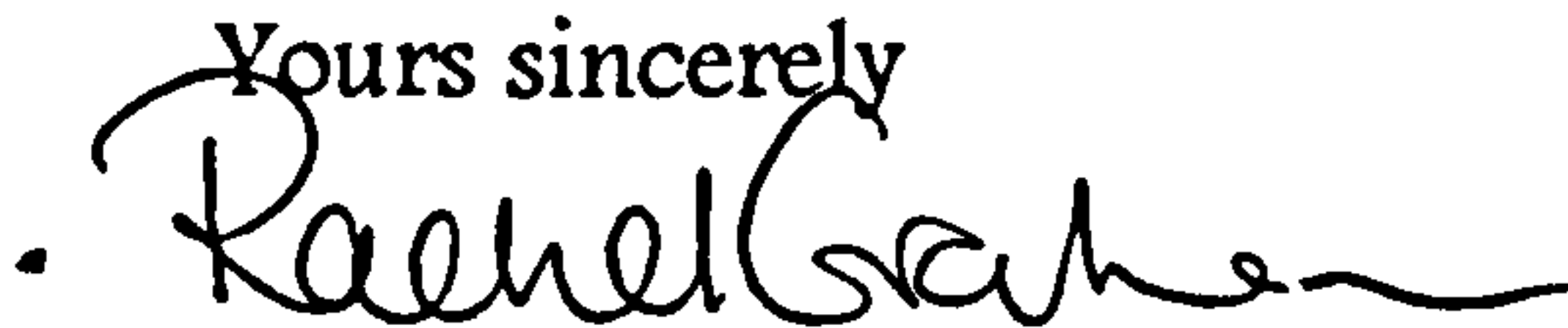
7 would you like to see additional questions asked? (if "yes", please state).....  
.....

8 Please use the following space to add any other criticisms, suggestions or comments about these questionnaires.  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

If you would be interested in receiving a brief summary of the findings of this research, please indicate so by filling out your name and address in the box below.

Once again, thank-you for your time.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Graham

Psychologist in Clinical Training.

NAME ADDRESS
-----------------

-||-

P.S Please find enclosed a S.A.E for return of completed questionnaires.



Christina Maslach • Susan E. Jackson • Richard L. Schwab

**Educators Survey**

The purpose of this survey is to discover how educators view their job and the people with whom they work closely.

On the following page there are 22 statements of job-related feelings. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way *about your job*. If you have *never* had this feeling, write a "0" (zero) in the space before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate *how often* you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way. An example is shown below.

**Example:**

HOW OFTEN:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

**HOW OFTEN**

0 - 6

Statement:

I feel depressed at work.

If you *never* feel depressed at work, you would write the number "0" (zero) under the heading "HOW OFTEN." If you *rarely* feel depressed at work (a few times a year or less), you would write the number "1." If your feelings of depression are fairly frequent (a few times a week, but not daily) you would write a "5."



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**3803 E. Bayshore Road • Palo Alto, CA 94303**

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# Educators Survey

HOW OFTEN:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

HOW OFTEN  
0 - 6

Statements:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.
4. \_\_\_\_\_
- I can easily understand how my students feel about things.
5. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.
6. \_\_\_\_\_
- Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
7. \_\_\_\_\_
- I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.
8. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel burned out from my work.
9. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
10. \_\_\_\_\_
- I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.
11. \_\_\_\_\_
- I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
12. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel very energetic.
13. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel frustrated by my job.
14. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel I'm working too hard on my job.
15. \_\_\_\_\_
- I don't really care what happens to some students.
16. \_\_\_\_\_
- Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
17. \_\_\_\_\_
- I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.
18. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.
19. \_\_\_\_\_
- I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
20. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.
21. \_\_\_\_\_
- In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.
22. \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel students blame me for some of their problems.

(Administrative use only)

cat. cat. cat.

EE: \_\_\_\_\_ DP: \_\_\_\_\_ PA: \_\_\_\_\_





## SEMI-STRUCTURES INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## SECTION 1: SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

**1. "With reference to question 2 on QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (generally, how well do you think you would cope with cases of suspected sexual abuse should they arise in your classroom?), I see that you gave the following response....., would you like to say any more about that?"**

[illegible]

**2. "With reference to question 3g on QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (How involved did you feel with the emotional distress of your pupil?) (*only applicable if teachers have had suspicions that a pupil may be a victim of CSA*), I see that you gave the following response....., would you like to say more about that?"**

[illegible]



3. "With reference to question 3h on QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (Looking back, how stressful did you find this experience?) *(only applicable if teachers have had suspicions that a pupil may be a victim of CS4)*, I see that you gave the following response....., would you like to say more about that?"

(Record).....  
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SECTION 2: DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

4. "With reference to question 4 on QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (Generally, how well do you feel would cope with cases of disclosed sexual abuse should they arise in your classroom?), I see that you gave the following response....., would you like to say more about that?"

(Record).....  
.....  
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.....

**5. "With reference to question 5g on QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (How involved did you feel with the emotional distress of your pupil? ) (*only applicable if teachers have had a pupil disclose CSA*), I see that you gave the following response....., would you like to say more about that?"**

[illegible]

**6. "With reference to question 5h on QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (Looking back, how stressful did you find this experience?) (*only applicable if teachers have had a pupil disclose CSA*), I see that you gave the following response....., would you like to say more about that?"**

[illegible]



**SECTION 3: ANY OTHER COMMENTS**

**7. "With reference to the last section in QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (Please use the following space to add any other comments in relation to the issues raised in this questionnaire) I see you responded as follows....., would you like to expand on any of those comments?"**

[illegible]

**READ OUT THE FOLLOWING**

[illegible][illegible]

(Record).....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



**“Do you think that there are issues that I have not covered that you would like to raise now?”**

[illegible]

**READ THE FOLLOWING**

“If you find that this interview has generated personal distress that you would like support with, there are a number of organisations that would be happy to help you.

*Explain process of GP referral to local clinical psychology service*

For more immediate emotional support, you can contact THE SAMARITANS, a 24 hour telephone counselling service that provides a non-judgmental listening ear in confidence. Tel:0345 909090.

If you have concerns about the safety of a pupil you can call:

SCOSAC (Standing Committee on the Sexual Abuse of Children): 0181-960 6376/ 969 4808

CHILDLINE:

NSPCC:

Finally, I would like you to read through the notes I have made of your responses, and comment on the accuracy of them

(Record their comment re degree of accuracy )

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Thankyou for your time and participation



A V

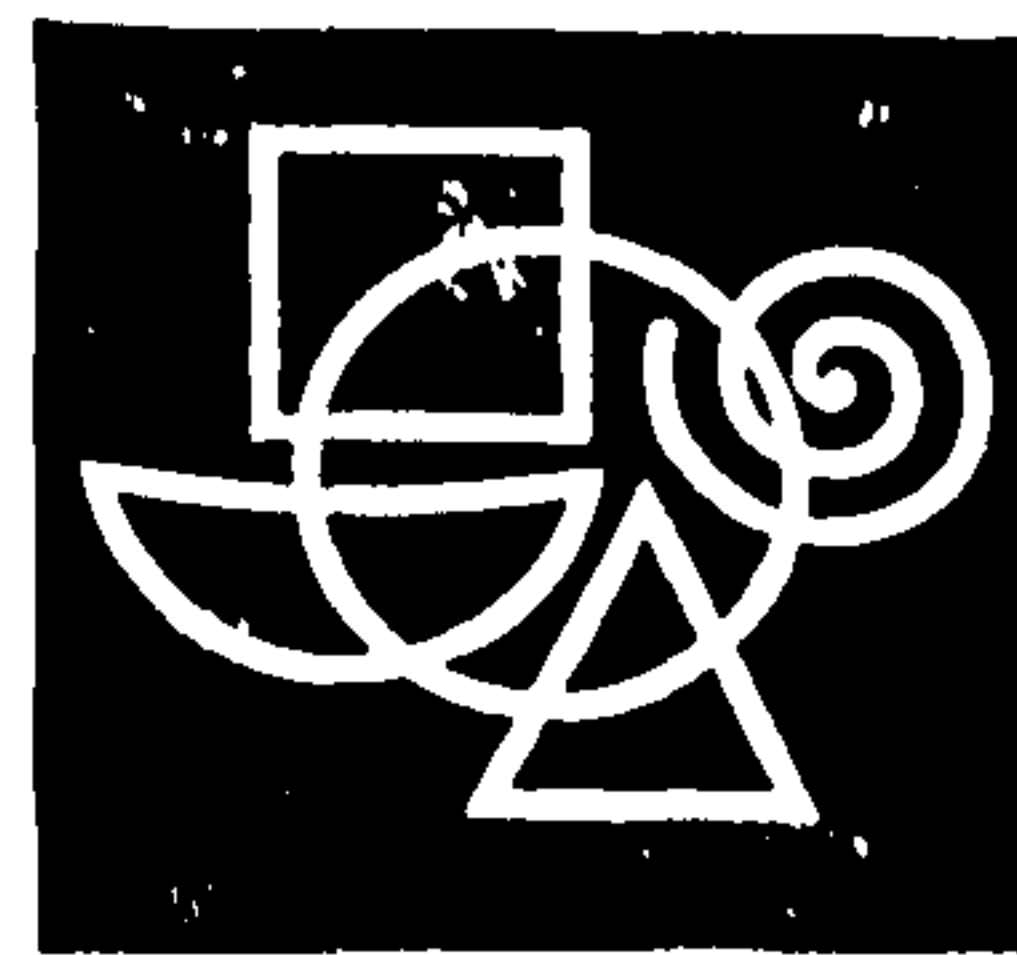
Your ref

Our ref

Date

AL/LT/075

9th January 1996



**SALOMONS  
CENTRE**

Ms R Graham  
Trainee Clinical Psychologist  
Salomons Centre

Dear Rachel,

The Ethics Panel is pleased to provide full ethical approval for your research project. The Panel would, however, like you to review your estimate of the time it would take to complete the questionnaires in the light of your pilot work. Apart from this point the Panel were impressed with the thoroughness with which the ethical issues had been considered and taken into account. We wish you well with the project and would be very interested to see the results.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Tony Lavender  
Director  
Clinical Psychology  
Training Scheme

Ms Anne Tofts  
Director  
Development Programmes

Mr Michael Maltby  
Top Grade Clinical Psychologist  
Weald of Kent Community  
NHS Trust

-122-

David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152 Facsimile: 01892 539102

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Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152

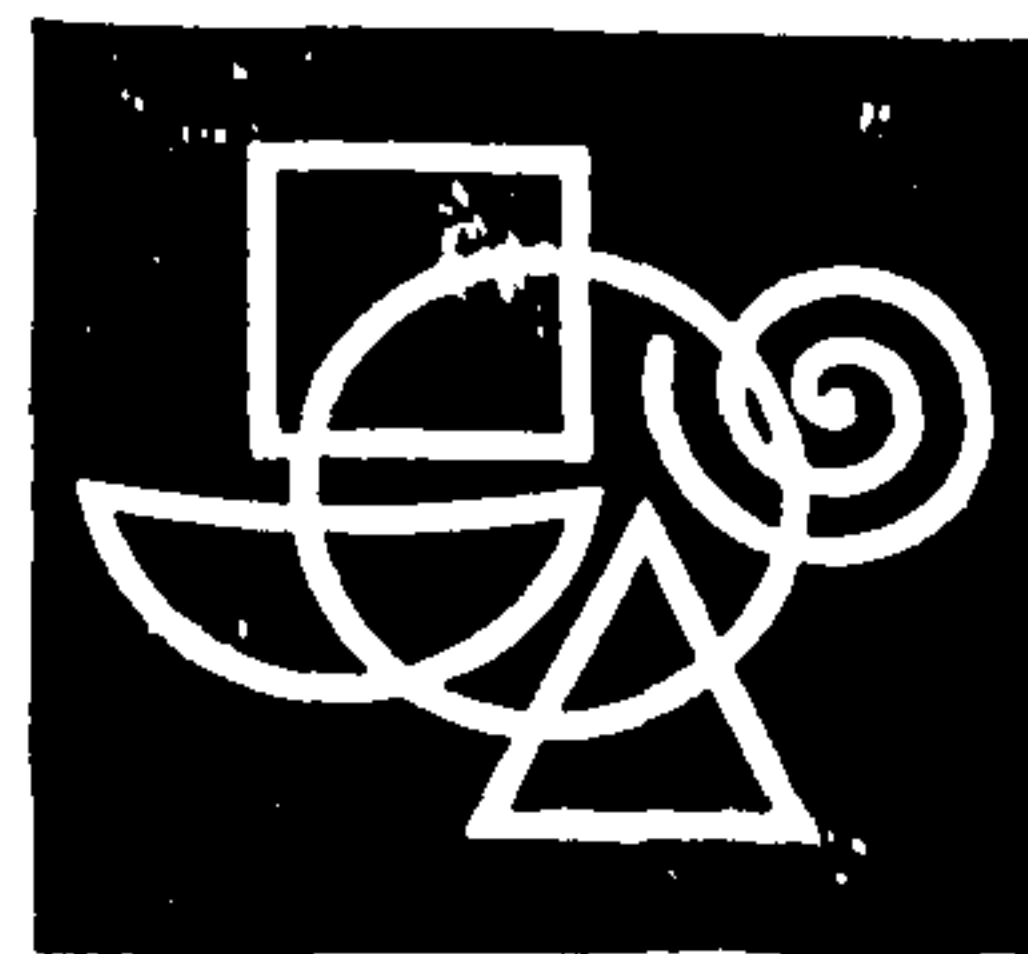
Fax: 01892 539102

Mr , Head teacher

Primary School

Street

London



SALOMONS  
CENTRE

January 1996

Dear Mr,

I am a psychologist in clinical training currently undertaking a doctoral research project investigating the impact on primary school teachers of working with children who may have been abused.

I am contacting .....Primary School, as one of the schools that has been randomly selected within ..... Education Authority to request your permission to invite your teachers to volunteer in this study. Participation in the first stage involves the completion of a questionnaire pack which takes approximately 30 minutes, (enclosed for your inspection). Participation in the second stage involves volunteering to be interviewed by myself in order that issues raised in the questionnaire can be expanded on. Volunteers may chose to participate in stage one only, or in both stages one and two.

All information generated from returned questionnaires and interviews will be treated in confidence and no information will be recorded in the write-up of this study that could possibly lead to the identification of schools or individual teachers.

This research was granted ethical approval by THE SALOMONS CENTRE Ethics Panel on 8.1.96.

If you are happy for your teachers to be invited to volunteer in this study, I can arrange a time, at their convenience, to distribute questionnaire packs and to give a brief presentation of the rationale and aims of the study. Alternatively, I could send questionnaire packs in the post for you to distribute. Please indicate your preference by ticking the appropriate boxes below.

-123-

Also at: First Floor, 14 Warren Yard, Warren Farm Office Village, Stratford Road, Wolverton Mill, MILTON KEYNES MK12 5NW



Stamped-addressed-envelopes will be provided for the return of questionnaires.

Teachers who are interested in the results of this study may request a summary of the findings from August 1996 by returning the request slip on page 11 of QUESTIONNAIRE 1.

I would be grateful if you could indicate your decision about participation in this study by returning the following slip in the stamp-addressed-envelope provided.  
Thank you for your time,

Yours sincerely

Rachel Graham  
Psychologist in Clinical Training

✂.....

Please tick the boxes as appropriate and return in the SAE provided

☐

1. I (Head-teacher) would like to be sent more information about the current study before deciding to invite my teachers to volunteer.

☐

2. I (Head-teacher) am happy for the teachers of .....Primary School to be invited to volunteer in the current study.

☐

a) Please send me.....(number) questionnaire packs in the post for distribution.

or...

☐

b) Please contact me by 'phone to arrange a brief presentation of rationale and aims of the current study and distribution of the questionnaire packs.

☐

3. I (Head-teacher) would rather the teachers of .....Primary school were not invited to volunteer in the current study.

It would be helpful if you could indicate your reason for non-participation (this information will remain entirely anonymous).....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU

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Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152

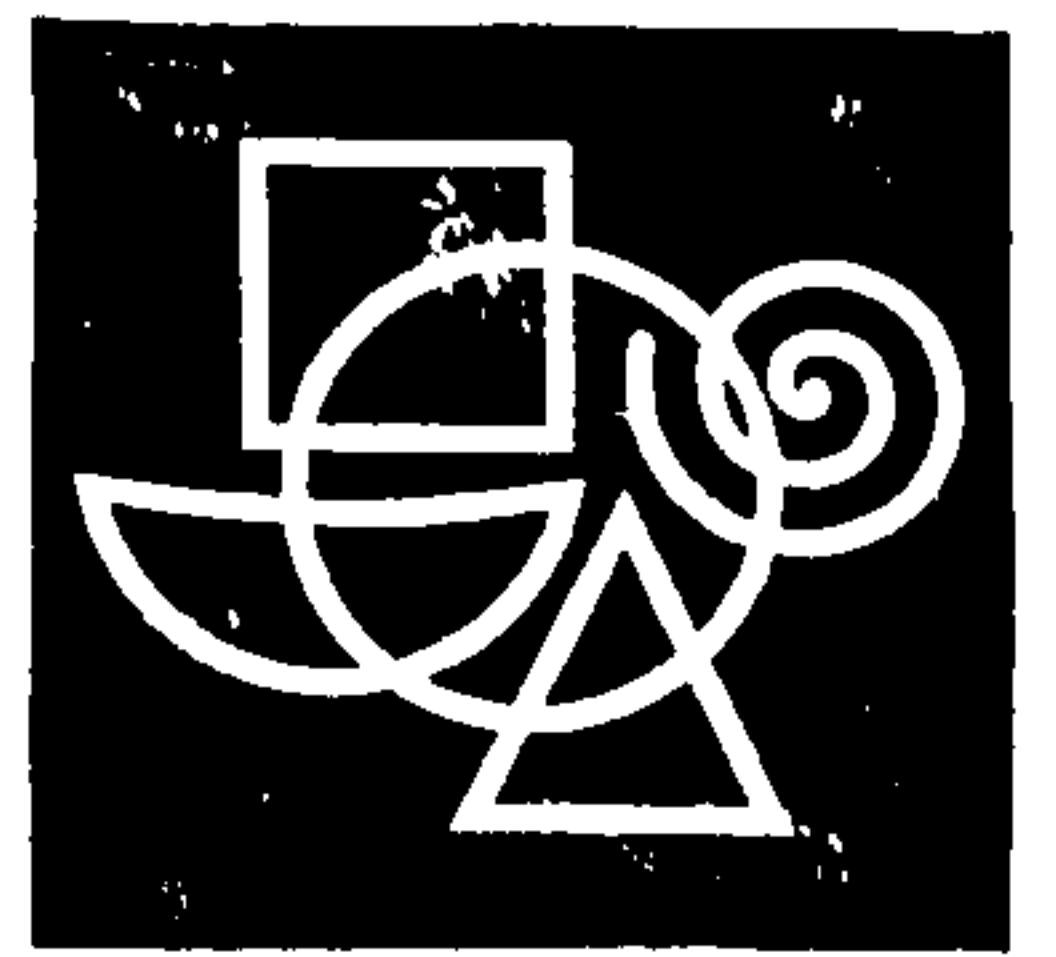
Fax: 01892 539102

Mr ....., Senior Assistant Education Officer

Planning and External Grants

X1 Education Authority

London



**SALOMONS  
CENTRE**

February 1996

Dear Mr...,

I am writing to request your approval regarding a research project that I am proposing to carry out with a sample of primary school teachers across various London LEAs.

I am a third year Clinical Psychology Trainee currently undertaking a research dissertation as part fulfilment of a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology with South Thames (Salomons) Clinical Psychology Training Scheme. The Salomons centre, which prepares trainees to become Clinical Psychologists within the NHS, has recently become part of Christchurch College, Canterbury, Kent. However, the doctoral qualification will be awarded by The Open University.

My research is investigating the impact on primary school teachers of working with children who may have been abused. I have enclosed a copy of my research proposal for your inspection.

The study consists of two stages. The first stage involves inviting a large sample of primary school teachers (selected from several LEAs) to complete a questionnaire pack which takes approximately 30 minutes. A stamped-addressed-envelope will be provided for the return of each questionnaire pack. The second stage involves inviting a small sample of volunteers to meet with me individually in order to expand on some of the issues raised in the questionnaire (the meeting would take no more than 1 hour). Teachers may chose to participate in both stages, or just stage one.

-125-

Also at: First Floor, 14 Warren Yard, Warren Farm Office Village, Stratford Road, Wolverton Mill, MILTON KEYNES MK12 5NW

Salomons Centre Ltd, Registered Office: North Holmes Road, CANTERBURY, Kent CT1 1QU Registered in England No: 3143393



*The data generated from the returned questionnaires and the individual meetings will be completely confidential and no information will be recorded for the statistical analysis or the write-up of the study that could possibly lead to the identification of individual primary schoolteachers, headteachers, schools or LEAs.*

This research has been granted ethical approval by the SALOMONS CENTRE ETHICS PANEL on 8.1.96 (see attached letter), and is being supervised by Dr Tony Lavender (Course Director of South Thames-Salomons-Clinical Psychology Training Scheme).

This research will be completed and written-up for submission in July 1996. Those participants who are interested in the results are invited to request a summary report by returning a slip attached to the back of the questionnaire pack.

Following LEA approval, I will contact the headteachers of a number of randomly selected primary schools with a cover letter and a copy of the questionnaire for their inspection (for copy of headteacher letter -see appendix vii of the research proposal).

If you have any inquiries about this research, please leave a message for me with the psychology secretaries at The Salomons Centre on 01892 515152, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

I look forward to hearing whether this proposal meets with your approval.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Graham

(Psychologist in Clinical Training)

Ms Rachel Graham  
Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate  
Broomhill Road  
Southborough  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN3 OTG

Dear Ms Graham

Research Project

Thank you for your letter of 18th February.

The LEA would have no objection to you undertaking the research you describe. It is for you to seek permission from individual schools to do the work with them and they, of course, could refuse, if they so wish.

I hope your project goes well.

Yours sincerely

General Inspector



Dear Rachel Graham,

RESEARCH APPROVAL

Thank you for your letter of 18 February concerning your research project.

I confirm that Education has no objection to you approaching headteachers in a number of the LEA's schools who may be willing to assist you.

May I take this opportunity to wish you well with your research which looks extremely interesting and valuable.

Yours sincerely,

A<sup>X</sup>

Ms Rachel Graham  
Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate  
Broomhill Road  
Southborough  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN3 0TG

28 February 1996

Dear Ms Graham

Thank you for your letter of 18 February enclosing details of the research project you wish to undertake with a sample of primary school teachers.

I have now had an opportunity to discuss your project with our Principal Educational Psychologist and we are happy for you to proceed. However I should point out that it will be up to individual head teachers to decide whether their school will be involved or not.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Director and  
Head of Pupil and Student Services



Rachel Graham  
Psychologist in Clinical Training  
Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate  
Broomhill Road  
Southborough  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN3 0TG

Dear Ms Graham

**Research into effects of working with children who may have been sexually abused upon primary school teachers**

Thank you for your letter of the 3rd March.

I can confirm that the authority has no objections to your proceeding with the research as detailed in your proposal and the further comments contained within your letter.

Needless to say, the decision to cooperate will very much remain with the headteachers of the selected schools.

I would be grateful if you would supply me with a list of the schools that are initially selected for inclusion in your sample and, on completion of the project, summary details of the research findings.

I wish you every success in your research project.

Yours sincerely

AEO (Info & Stats)

Dear Rachel Graham

**Re: Research project - the impact on primary school teachers of working with children who may have been abused.**

I have been asked to respond to your request by . The area is a particular concern and interest of mine professionally so I read your proposal with enthusiasm. The authority would be prepared to endorse your research undertaking with the schools here, however, it would be helpful and for our own training in the area if you felt able to provide us with some feedback. Perhaps, a copy of the final document? I would be pleased to discuss any issues further if you would find that helpful. In particular, my experience from the perspective of a trainer of teachers in the psychological and emotional issues related to CSA.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely,

**Acting Principal Educational Psychologist**

cc . , Inspectors and Advisory Service



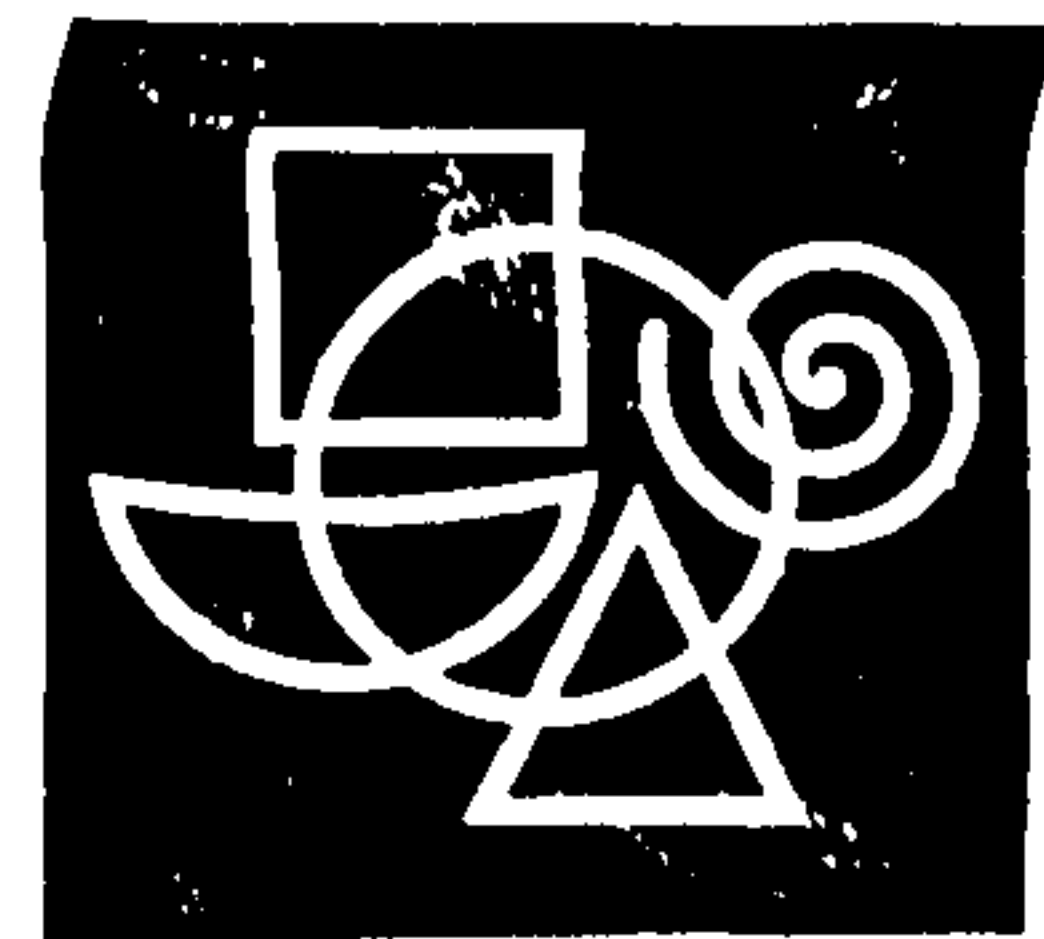
Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152

Fax: 01892 539102  
Mr ....., Headteacher

Primary School

London



**SALOMONS  
CENTRE**

March 1996

Dear Mr .....,

I am a psychologist in clinical training within the NHS and I am currently undertaking a doctoral research project investigating how primary school teachers feel about the possibility of working with children who may have been abused.

I am contacting your school, as one of a large number of schools that have been randomly selected across five London LEAs, to request your permission to invite your teachers to volunteer in this study.

*I would be happy to hear from teachers whether or not they have worked with children who may have been abused.*

Participation in the first stage involves the completion of a questionnaire pack which takes approximately 30 minutes, (enclosed for your inspection). Participation in the second stage involves volunteering to be interviewed by myself in order that issues raised in the questionnaire can be expanded on. Volunteers may chose to participate in stage one only, or in both stages one and two.

*All information generated from returned questionnaires and interviews will be treated in confidence and no information will be recorded in the statistical analysis or write-up of this study that could possibly lead to the identification of pupils, teachers, schools or LEAs.*

This research was granted ethical approval by THE SALOMONS CENTRE Ethics Panel on 8.1.96 and has been scrutinised and approved by ....., at X Education Office on ..... (see attached letter of approval).

If you are happy for your teachers to be invited to volunteer in this study, I can arrange a time, at their convenience, to distribute questionnaire packs and to give a brief presentation of the rationale and aims of the study. Alternatively, I could send questionnaire packs in the post for you to distribute. Please indicate your preference by ticking the appropriate boxes below.

— 132 —

Also at: First Floor, 14 Warren Yard, Warren Farm Office Village, Stratford Road, Wolverton Mill, MILTON KEYNES MK12 5NW

Stamped-addressed-envelopes will be provided for the return of questionnaires.

Teachers who are interested in the results of this study may request a summary of the findings from August 1996 by returning the request slip on page 11 of QUESTIONNAIRE 1.

I would be grateful if you could indicate your decision about participation in this study by returning the following slip in the stamp-addressed-envelope provided.

Thank you for your time,

Yours sincerely

Rachel Graham  
Psychologist in Clinical Training

X.....

Please tick the boxes as appropriate and return in the SAE provided

☐ 1. I (Head-teacher) would like to be sent more information about the current study before deciding to invite my teachers to volunteer.

☐ 2. I (Head-teacher) am happy for the teachers of.....Primary School to be uinvited to volunteer in the current study.

☐ a) Please send me.....(number) questionnaire packs in the post for distribution.

or...

☐ b) Please contact me by 'phone to arrange a brief presentation of rationale and aims of the current study and distribution of the questionnaire packs.

☐ 3. I (Head-teacher) would rather the teachers of..... Primary school were not invited to volunteer in the current study.

It would be helpful if you could indicate your reason for non-participation (this information will also remain entirely confidential)

.....

.....

.....

.....

PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNIARE PACK IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED IF YOU ARE NOT PARTICIPATING

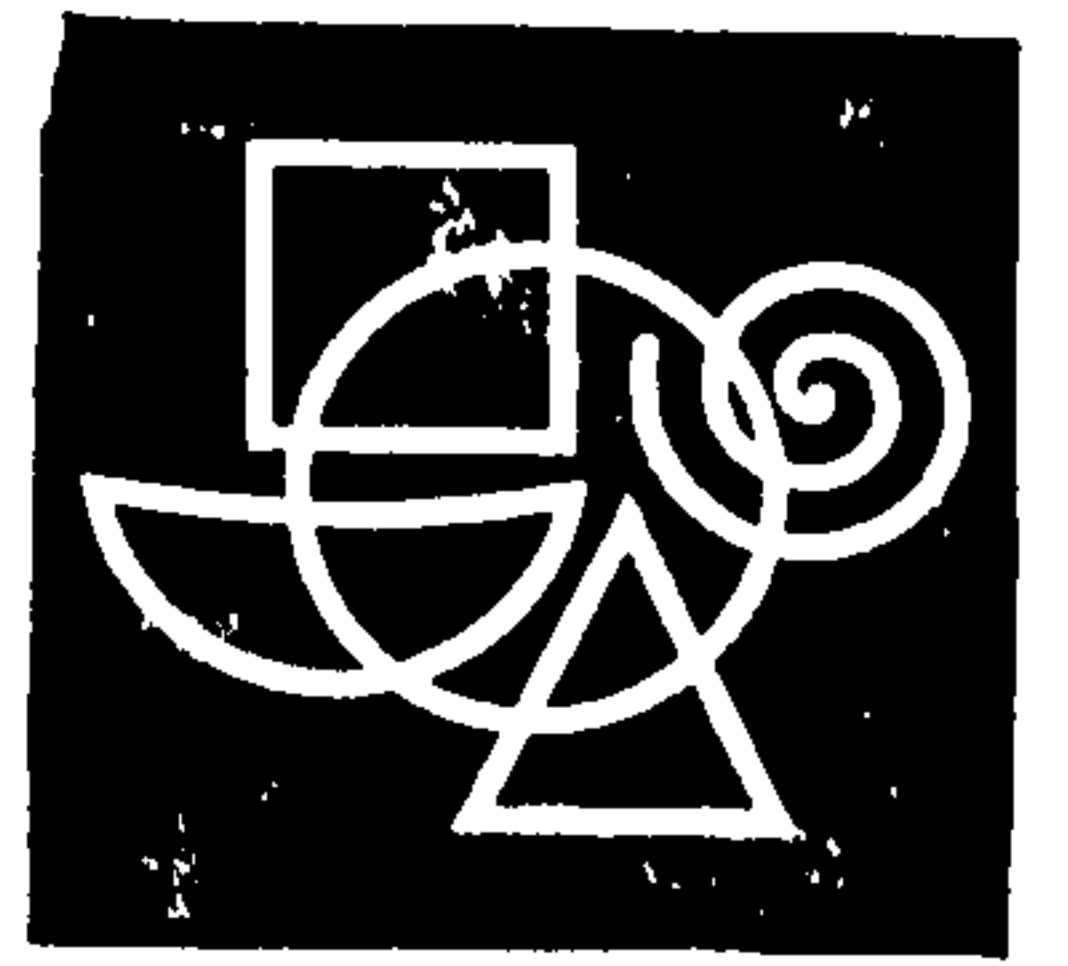
THANK YOU



A XIV

Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152  
Fax: 01892 539102



SALOMONS  
CENTRE

Headteacher  
Primary School  
Road  
London

March 1996

Dear ,

Re: Research investigating how teachers feel about the possibility of working with children who may have been sexually abused.

You may remember that I wrote to you in January regarding the above research which I am undertaking as part fulfillment of a NHS doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology.

You were then contacted by the Assistant Director of ..... Education Office who made you aware that they had not been informed of my proposed research.

This situation has now been rectified and my research proposal has been scrutinised and approved by Mr....., Assistant Education Officer (Info & Stats). See attached letter.

I am therefore re-contacting your school as one of a large number of schools that has been randomly selected across five London LEAs, to request your permission to invite your teachers to volunteer in this study.

Participation in the first stage of the study involves the completion of a questionnaire pack which takes approximately 30 minutes, (enclosed for your inspection). Participation in the second stage involves volunteering to be interviewed by myself in order that issues raised in the questionnaire can be expanded on. Volunteers may chose to participate in stage one only, or in both stages one and two.

*I would be happy to hear from teachers whether or not they have worked with children who may have been abused.*

*All information generated from returned questionnaires and interviews will be treated in confidence and no information will be recorded in the statistical analysis or write-up of this study that could possibly lead to the identification of pupils, teachers, schools or LEAs.*

-134-

Also at: First Floor, 14 Warren Yard, Warren Farm Office Village, Stratford Road, Wolverton Mill, MILTON KEYNES MK12 5NW

Salomons Centre Ltd, Registered Office: North Holmes Road, CANTERBURY, Kent CT1 1QU Registered in England No: 3143393

This research was granted ethical approval by THE SALOMONS CENTRE Ethics Panel on 8.1.96

If you are happy for your teachers to be invited to volunteer in this study, I can arrange a time, at their convenience, to distribute questionnaire packs and to give a brief presentation of the rationale and aims of the study. Alternatively, I could send questionnaire packs in the post for you to distribute. Please indicate your preference by ticking the appropriate boxes below.

Stamped-addressed-envelopes will be provided for the return of questionnaires.

Teachers who are interested in the results of this study may request a summary of the findings from August 1996 by returning the request slip on page 11 of QUESTIONNAIRE 1.

I would be grateful if you could indicate your decision about participation in this study by returning the following slip in the stamp-addressed-envelope provided.

Thank you for your time once again,

Yours sincerely

Rachel Graham

Psychologist in Clinical Training

X.....

*Please tick the boxes as appropriate and return in the SAE provided*

- ☐ 1. I (Head-teacher) would like to be sent more information about the current study before deciding to invite my teachers to volunteer.
- ☐ 2. I (Head-teacher) am happy for the teachers of ..... Primary School to be invited to volunteer in the current study.
- ☐ a) Please send me.....(number) questionnaire packs in the post for distribution.  
or...
- ☐ b) Please contact me by 'phone to arrange a brief presentation of rationale and aims of the current study and distribution of the questionnaire packs.
- ☐ 3. I (Head-teacher) would rather the teachers of ..... Primary school were not invited to volunteer in the current study.

It would be helpful if you could indicate your reason for non-participation (this information will be entirely confidential)

.....

**PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE PACK IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED IF YOU ARE NOT PARTICIPATING**

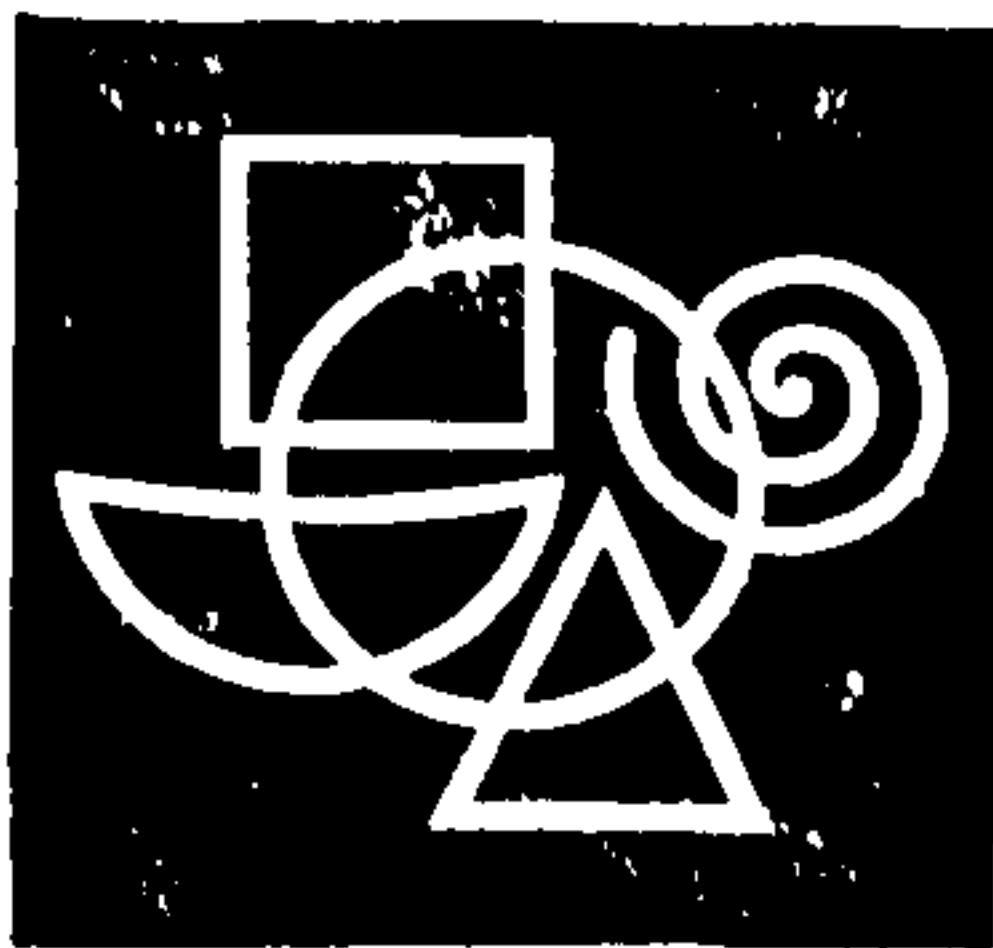
**THANKYOU**



Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152  
Fax: 01892 539102

Mrs....., Headteacher  
Primary School  
London



**SALOMONS  
CENTRE**  
April 1996

Dear Mrs.....,

**Re: Research investigating the impact on primary school teachers of working with children who may have been abused.**

You may remember that I wrote to you on.....96 requesting your permission to invite your teachers to participate in the above study.

I am writing to those schools that have not yet replied, as to make use of the data I need to have the questionnaires *returned by Friday May 17th*.

In case you have mislaid the original letter, I have provided another return slip and would very much appreciate its return.

Thank you for your time  
yours sincerely

Rachel Graham  
Psychologist in Clinical Training

*Please tick one box as appropriate*

☐ 1.I (Headteacher) am happy for the teachers of .....Primary to be invited to volunteer. Please send me .....(number) questionnaires that I will distribute.

☐ 2. I (Headteacher) would like more information about this research before inviting my teachers to volunteer.

☐ 3. I (Headteacher) would rather my teachers were not invited to volunteer in this research because.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*(Your comments will remain confidential)*

**THANK YOU**

## Reasons given by headteachers (returned on reply slips) for non-participation in the survey

The following 63 reasons were given by Heads for choosing not to participate in the survey. They have been categorised into the following five groups:

1. General time/work pressure (22 comments)
2. OFSTED (20 comments)
3. School already involved in other research (6 comments)
4. Expressing wish not to, or unable to, participate (5 comments)
5. An indication that there were no abused children in the school (10 comments)

### *1. Time/work pressure (22 comments)*

Lack of time at present, with regret.

Staff feel they already have more than enough paper work and do not wish to volunteer. Sorry.

My staff are very busy at the moment with several projects, sorry.

Time constraints.

I have discussed this with my designated teacher for child protection and we both feel we cannot manage the time.

Apologies, would normally participate but there's a lot going on in the school at the moment; appointment of new head and a lot of paper work.

Teacher's work load. I prefer to work with agencies with more direct contact.

Simply a lack of time- very sorry.

Thank you for your letter. It is unbelievable how many times my school is "randomly sampled" for exercises such as yours. I fully appreciate how important this type of evidence gathering is, but I am afraid I cannot offer our services on this occasion. We are so over-burdened with paper work and pressure that I cannot in all conscience, give my staff more work to do. I am very sorry, and I wish you luck in your research. Best wishes.

We have had a considerable amount of staff illness and we have a lot of catching up to do. Sorry.

Pressures of work.

The teachers are under considerable pressure at this time due to SATS, school journey, and large scale re-organisation of resource rooms & equipment, and we do not wish to add to their current work load.

Time availability and work load.

Unfortunately there are too many initiatives going on at school. The staff are under too much pressure and too stressed to do any more at the moment.

Teachers are overloaded at moment. School destroyed by fire in summer holidays. Now re-located.

Sorry, very busy at present.

Pressure of work.

They are extremely under pressure with work load, e.g., report writing at this time of year.

We do not have time!



Sorry- we are currently in the difficult and sensitive process of making teachers redundant because of budget cutbacks. I don't feel able to put any extra work load on them.

We are a small school and the work load on my teachers is tremendous. I cannot ask them to do any more. Sorry.

We are under a lot of pressure arising from budget cuts and loss of teachers. We are also moving towards amalgamation. We did have an excellent OFSTED, will keep us going. Sorry not to be of help this time.

## ***2.OFSTED (22 comments)***

We are having an OFSTED inspection in June

Pressure of work/inspection.

Pressures! OFSTED! Pending! Sorry!

The school is under a great deal of pressure currently following an OFSTED inspection. Although I would normally support participation in a project such as this, I really feel I cannot ask my staff to take on any extra work loads at the moment.

The school recently underwent an OFSTED inspection and are currently awaiting a further inspector. All members of staff are working extremely long hours in a stressful situation and, whilst I find this an interesting project, I clearly do not wish to place staff under further burden of paper work or extra work involving even more of their time.

In a large school of 500+ pupils shortly to be involved in an OFSTED inspection, we feel that we cannot undertake extra participation in other projects. Apologies.

We have been involved in so much recently in terms of research and OFSTED that I cannot ask staff for any more.

We have just had an OFSTED inspection. There is lots of work to do and colleagues are "shattered", i.e. tired. Sorry.

We have just had an OFSTED inspection, very busy working through plans.

Sorry but very involved in preparing for OFSTED and extensions of school. Unable to give this the necessary time at the present. Good luck.

They are under great pressure with an impending OFSTED inspection. I do not think they will wish to participate.

Teachers overloaded. OFSTED.

We are currently in the middle of OFSTED preparation and regretfully unable to help in this survey. I am sorry we are unable to help and wish you success in your project.

We are preparing for OFSTED and my teachers do not wish to be involved- they are very busy.

We are in the middle of being OFSTEDed and cannot take on any more at present.

Current commitments, e.g. OFSTED inspection.

Post-OFSTED trauma!

Staff do not wish to participate- too busy with OFSTED.

We are in post-OFSTED phase of planning. We have lost a headteacher and 2 senior managers and are currently trying to build a stable staff. We would be willing to participate in future research.

Pressure of time/work/OFSTED Sorry!

### ***3. Already involved in other research (6 comments):***

We have already completed a survey of teacher's work load. I feel it inappropriate to ask any more of their time.

We are already involved in supplying responses to a number of studies, I wish you well in your research.

In reply to your letter, neither of the three boxes on your return slip apply, therefore I felt I would write and explain the situation in more detail. In normal circumstances I would be more than willing, as would my staff, to take part in your research. However, we are currently taking part in research regarding initial teacher training with X University as well as being part of the sample of schools reporting to SCAA on the statutory assessment at KS1 and 2, and taking part in other borough projects. I therefore feel the teachers are rather overloaded at the moment. I would however have no problem in taking part in a similar piece of research at a different time. Should you wish to discuss the matter more fully, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your request would be the 5th that we have received so far this year seeking the schools views. There is nothing personal in rejecting your particular request- just overload! Apologies.

The staff are under extreme pressure of work and it would be difficult to take part in further research investigations.

We have participated in several projects recently and I would rather not take on another. Sorry!

### ***4. Expressing wish not to, or unable to participate in research (6 Comments):***

The teachers of X school would rather not be involved.

I regret we are unable to take part in your research.

I have informed the staff of this survey, shown them the enclosures and asked if any wish to participate. They have all declined to participate.

We do not wish to be involved in this study.

I have spoken to them all about it already and none of them have come forward.

It is not appropriate at the moment.

### ***5. No abused children in the school (10 comments):***

I appear to be the only member of staff who has had any contact with children who have been though to have been abused- in previous schools.

To my knowledge our children have not been abused. However, I have attended courses on the subject and am aware that it is something that we may need to deal with.

We have had very few abused children recently: teaching staff who were more directly involved have left the school.

No children at the school have been abused.

Very small school (under 100). No problems that we are aware of at present.

To date we have only had one suspected case of abuse (I have been in post here for 15 years).

I am quite happy for the staff to participate but they do not wish to as they either don't have experience of abused children or they don't wish to do another survey. Sorry!

I have been in the school 2 years. No teacher has brought anything to my attention in that time. I am the named child protection officer. I believe my teachers, several of whom are recently qualified, have not had any direct experience of dealing with such children.



Few or none have had experience of this to be of great help and there are many demands on their time at the moment.

Staff do not have time and are already overworked. We do not have any children here who have been abused, as far as we know.

# **ATTENTION ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING  
IN SOME RESEARCH, PLEASE READ ON.....**

The questionnaires in the box below are part of a doctoral research project investigating the concerns and experiences of primary school teachers in relation to pupils where there are suspicions that the child may be a victim of child sexual abuse, or where there has been a disclosure of sexual abuse. Please see the first page of the questionnaire pack for more information.

**PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY  
AND ALL DATA COLLECTED WILL BE  
ENTIRELY CONFIDENTIAL**

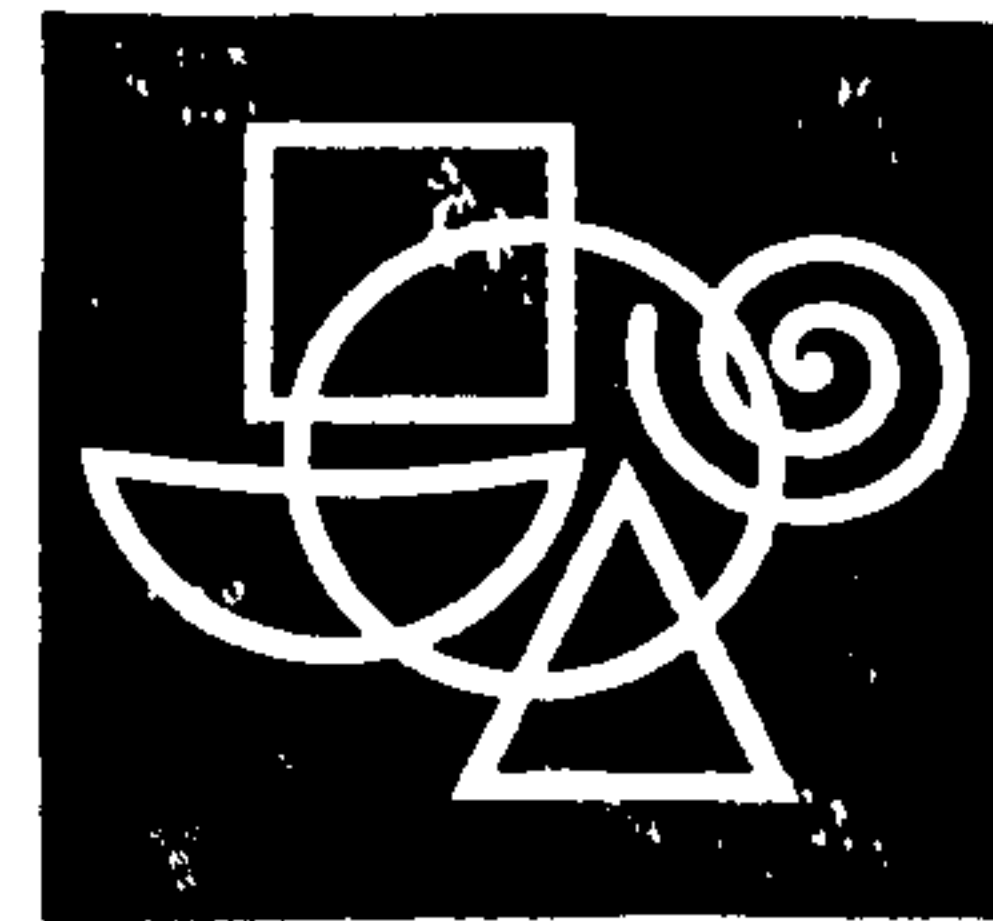
NB: This research was granted ethical approval by the Salomons Ethics Panel on 8.1.96 and by five LEA in South London but has not been submitted for independent approval from your LEA.

If you have any inquiries about this research, please 'phone Rachel Graham (psychologist in clinical training) on: 01892-515152



Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152  
Fax: 01892 539102



**SALOMONS  
CENTRE**

Dear Headteacher

I am a psychologist in clinical training within the NHS and I am currently undertaking a doctoral research project investigating how primary school teachers feel about the possibility of working with children who may have been sexually abused.

*I am hoping that you, or a colleague, would be willing to participate. I would be happy to hear from teachers whether or not they have worked with children who may have been abused.*

Participation in the first stage of this study involves the completion of a questionnaire pack (attached) which takes approximately 30 minutes. Participation in the second stage involves volunteering to be interviewed by myself in order that issues raised in the questionnaire can be expanded on. Volunteers may chose to participate in stage one only, or in both stages one and two.

*All information generated from returned questionnaires and interviews will be treated in confidence and no information will be recorded in the statistical analysis or write-up of this study that could possibly lead to the identification of pupils, teachers, schools or LEAs.*

This research was granted ethical approval by THE SALOMONS CENTRE Ethics Panel on 8.1.96 and has been approved by five LEAs in South London. However, it has not been submitted for independent approval from your LEA.

To request questionnaires for distribution in your school, please tick the box in the slip below.

Thank you for your time, yours sincerely

Rachel Graham

Psychologist in Clinical Training

X.....

*Return this slip in the SAE provided with this questionnaire*

☐ I am interested in this research, but would like to be sent more information before I decide whether or not to participate.

☐ Please send me.....(number) of questionnaires that I will distribute in my school

Name.....

☒ Address.....

..... Phone .....

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Also at: First Floor, 14 Warren Yard, Warren Farm Office Village, Stratford Road, Wolverton Mill, MILTON KEYNES MK12 5NW



A DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT ON PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS  
OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO MAY HAVE BEEN ABUSED

This research was granted ethical approval by the SALOMONS CENTRE Ethics Panel on 8.1.96

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE LOOKING AT THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The attached questionnaires are part of a doctoral research project investigating how primary school teachers feel about the possibility of working with children where there are suspicions that the child may be a victim of child sexual abuse, or where there has been a disclosure by the child of sexual abuse.

*I would be happy to hear from teachers whether or not they have worked with pupils who may have been abused.*

The 1st part of the research involves collecting information from a large sample of teachers using questionnaires, including these ones if you decide to participate by filling them in. The 2nd part of the research will involve meeting a smaller number of teachers who have given their agreement to talk about their experiences in more depth.

If you decide to participate in the 1st part of this research (i.e. completion of the enclosed questionnaires) I would be grateful if you would complete all sections of the questionnaires as appropriate, which should take you approximately 30 minutes. Return of the questionnaires (in the SAE provided) will be considered as consent to participate in part 1. If you wish to participate in the 2nd part, please complete the consent form enclosed at the end of the questionnaire pack.

*Respondents will remain anonymous unless having volunteered to participate in the 2nd stage of the research, i.e. a face-to-face meeting with me. All information, whether or not it is anonymous, will be completely confidential. No information will be recorded in the statistical analysis or write-up of this research that could possibly lead to the identification of pupils, teachers, schools or LEAs.*

Thank you for your co-operation

Rachel Graham

Psychologist in Clinical Training



<p>CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN STAGE 2 OF RESEARCH PROJECT</p>
--

**TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:** The impact on Primary School Teachers of working with children who may have been abused.

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Rachel Graham (Psychologist in Clinical Training)

**ETHICAL APPROVAL GRANTED BY THE SALOMONS ETHICS PANEL ON 8.1.96**

**What would be expected of you if you were to decide to take part in the second stage of this research?** Consent to Stage 2 of this research would involve me contacting you (at the number or address you choose to leave) in order to arrange a meeting with me at a time and place of your convenience. The interview would last no longer than one hour.

**What sort of information would I be asked about?** The purpose of this interview is to give you the opportunity to expand on your responses to certain questions in QUESTIONNAIRE 1. (questions no: 2,3g,3h,4,5g & 5h) and to expand on any other comments you may have made about the issues raises in QUESTIONNAIRE 1.

**What are the aims of this research?** The aims of this research are to study the number and nature of primary school teachers' experiences of working with children who may have been abused, in order to investigate how factors such as: teacher training, teacher support systems and occupational stress, affect teachers' ability to cope with cases of suspected or disclosed abuse.

**ANY CONTACT DETAILS WILL REMAIN STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. NO INFORMATION WILL BE RECORDED IN THE INTERVIEW OR DESCRIBED IN THE WRITE-UP OF THIS RESEARCH THAT COULD POSSIBLY LEAD TO YOUR IDENTIFICATION.**

<p>Name.....</p> <p>Address or 'phone no.-(work or home).....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>I hereby give my consent to be contacted to participate in the second stage of the above research project. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and that all information is confidential. I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any stage without necessarily giving a reason for doing so and without prejudicing any future health care I may receive.</p> <p>SIGNED.....DATE.....</p>
---



## RESEARCH RESULTS

If you are interested in the results of this research, a summary of the findings can be requested from **August 1996**, by completing the following slip (please return separately from the questionnaires in order to maintain anonymity).

✂.....

Return to: Rachel Graham, Psychology Department, Salomons Centre, Broomhill Road,  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Kent, TN3 0BR

**Request for a summary of the findings of the Primary Schoolteacher research.**

Name.....

Address.....

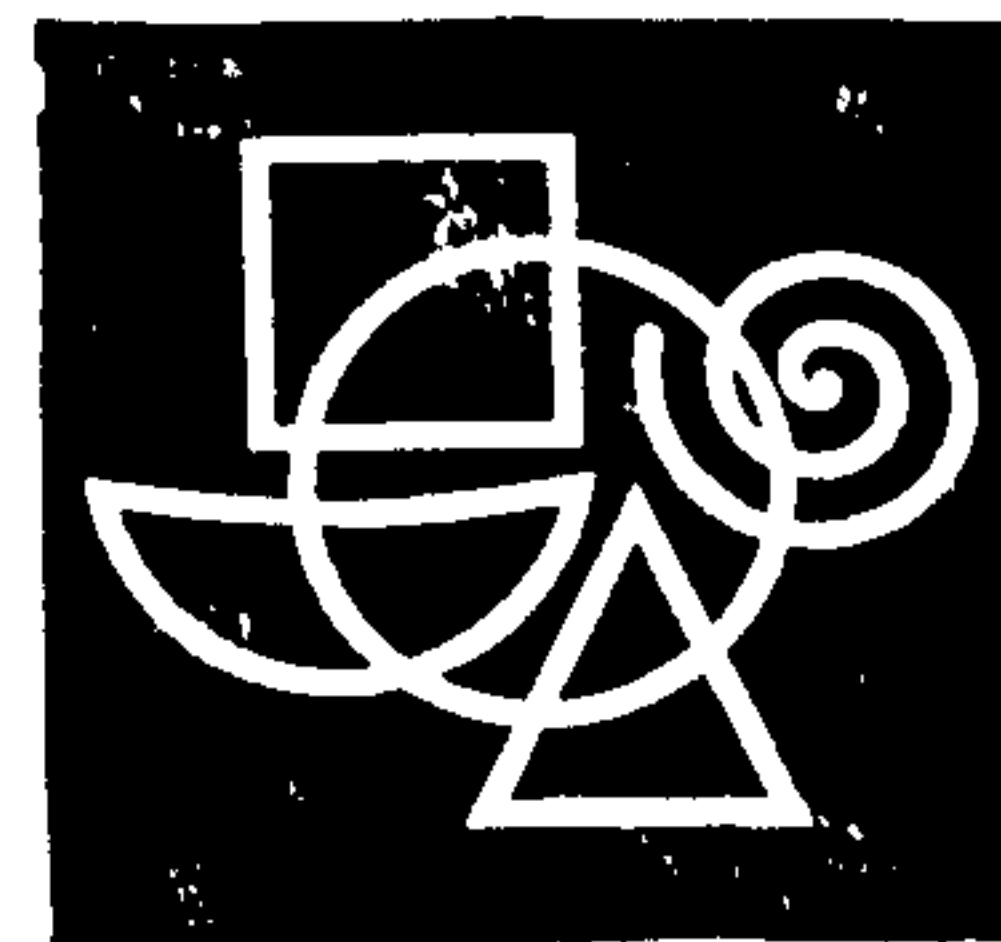
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A XXII

Salomons Centre  
David Salomons Estate, Broomhill Road  
Southborough, TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
Kent TN3 0TG

Telephone: 01892 515152  
Fax: 01892 539102



SALOMONS  
CENTRE

Mrs  
London

16.6.96

Dear Mrs

Re Research investigating the impact on primary school teachers of  
working with children who may have been abused.

Thank you for participating in stage one of the above research which  
involved completing a questionnaire.

You kindly consented to participate in stage two which involved an  
individual interview. However, I have now finished the interviews as I  
have met my required quota.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your willingness to  
participate and to thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Graham  
Psychologist in Clinical Training

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